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CHAMPION**  
Canterbury Park  
Shakopee, MN  
April 27-29, 2018



# Rob Wazwaz

**WINS MSPT CANTERBURY PARK FOR \$109,375**

**AARON JOHNSON  
WINS GRAND  
FALLS REGIONAL**

**POTAWATOMI  
REGIONAL  
PREVIEW**

**RICK BURLESON  
WINS SD STATE  
CHAMPIONSHIP**

**MSPT SAYS  
GOODBYE TO  
LEE SURMA**

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# Letter from the Editor

## SAYING FAREWELL TO A MSPT CHAMP

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

In early May, the poker world received the sad news that Lee Surma, 58, of Maple Grove, Minnesota passed away at North Memorial Hospital.

Born March 8, 1960 to Robert and Iris (Korll) Surma, Lee graduated from St. John's Preparatory School in 1978. He received his BA in Accounting from St. Cloud State University. After college he went to work as a CPA, and later worked as a computer database programmer.

Lee loved the outdoors, especially hiking, skiing and hunting. In his earlier years Lee enjoyed playing chess. He loved his time at YMCA Camp Olson, both as a camper and a counselor. Lee was a Midwest Poker Tournament Champion and a well-respected tournament poker player in the state of Minnesota. Lee loved spending time with his children, family and significant other, Cindy.

Lee is survived by his children, Benjamin Surma (Minneapolis), Amanda Surma (Maple Grove) and Victoria Surma (Maple Grove); parents, Robert and Iris Surma; siblings Greg Surma, Jane (Brad) Dale, Mike (Jolinda) Surma, Julie Surma (John Davis), Jill Surma (John Marthaler); significant other Cindy Landeen; and many nieces and nephews and cousins.

Lee was a familiar face in the Minnesota poker community. He preferred tournaments over cash games, and from 2008-11 he would often play online. Back in Season 2, he bested a field of 171 players to win the MSPT Grand Casino Mille Lacs for \$47,667.

Six months later, Lee made another MSPT final table when he finished seventh in the MSPT Northern Lights Casino for \$6,276. That same year, he placed fourth in the \$1,000 Great Minnesota Freeze Out for \$10,166. All told, Lee had \$113,986 in career earnings.



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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

# RICK BURLESON WINS 2018 MSPT SOUTH DAKOTA STATE POKER CHAMPIONSHIP AT SILVERADO-FRANKLIN CASINO!

*Major Poker Tour Returns to Deadwood for First Time Since 2009*

BY CHAD HOLLOWAY

Since its inception in 2011, the South Dakota State Poker Championship has been a standalone event at Deadwood's Silverado-Franklin Casino. In seven years, the fields fluctuated from 82 to 136 entries, but in 2018 the field jumped to 286 runners thanks in part to partnering with the MSPT for the first time.

It marked the first time in nearly a decade since a major poker tour has hosted an event in Deadwood, and it wound up setting the major tournament (\$1K+ buy-in) record for both attendance and prize pool in state history by surpassing the 2009 HPT Lucky Nugget Gambling Hall (176 entries/\$250,230 prize pool).

After a full weekend of play, local car salesman Rick Burleson walked away the champion after defeating Minnesota's Aaron Johnson heads-up to win \$63,462 and keep the title on home turf. It marked Burleson's first-ever documented tournament cash.

"I feel amazing, it's life-changing," said the 29-year-old Burleson, who was staked in the tournament by a friend. "It's the biggest tournament in South Dakota state history, so it's awesome. You just have to be patient in these big tournaments."

Burleson revealed that he had to work first thing in the morning but was going to take some time to soak in the win.

"I used to play a lot more, but now that I work six days a week and have a one-and-a-half-year-old boy at home with my wife, I don't have as much time to play poker."

Day 2 saw 54 players return to action with Burleson as a big chip leader. With only 36 slated to get paid, 18 walked away empty handed including Minnesota players Alan Carty, Brian Berthiaume, and Steve Belland, as well as 2012 South Dakota State Poker Champ Cal Dardis and bubble boy Rich Dixon, who lost a race with ace-queen against pocket eights.

Among those to leave with a cash in Deadwood were Henry Gingerich (11th - \$4,663), Rollie Tescher (18th - \$3,173), Gary Germann (20th - \$2,897), Ken Lybeck (28th - \$1,931), Rick Wells (30th - \$1,931), and back-to-back champ (2016 & 2017) Ryan Skluzak (31st - \$1,931).

### Final Table Action

The first elimination of the final table came when Jon Wurden got his stack all in holding the A♥K♦ against the 9♦9♣ of local pro Michael Campbell. The board ran out J♣10♥5♣2♦J♠



Rick Burleson

and Wurden finished in tenth place for \$4,663.

Not long after, the last woman standing in the 2018 MSPT South Dakota State Poker Championship, Rosie Paules, bowed out in ninth place after her A♠K♥ was outdrawn by the J♣10♥ of Eric Eelkema, who made a full house on a 6♣8♣J♦J♠10♦ run out.

Burleson then claimed his first final table knockout when Evans, who began the final table as chip leader, three-bet all in holding pocket nines only to run them smack dab into Burleson's pocket kings. Evans earned \$7,450 for finishing in eighth place.

From there, Mark Larson busted after failing to win a flip with ace-king against Larry Christensen's nines, and then Christensen, a farmer from nearby Kennebec, lost ace-ten to the ace-jack of Johnson.

After a short-stacked Campbell took his leave in fifth place



# Silverado-Franklin Casino

for \$15,727, four-time World Series of Poker Circuit ring winner Mark Fink followed him out the door in fourth. First Fink lost a big one when his pocket aces were out flopped by Burleson, who made jacks and tens. Two hands later, Fink got his remaining stack in with the A♠7♦ only to run it into Burleson's A♦8♣. The board ran out 7♥6♦9♣10♣9♦ and Burleson made a straight to send Fink home in fourth place for \$20,970.

From there, Eelkema three-bet jammed holding the K♦J♦ and was called by Johnson's A♥J♥, which held on an 8♣10♦J♠10♥7♠ run out. That set up a heads-up match between Burleson and Johnson with the former holding 3.6 million to the latter's 2.11 million.

Burleson soon pulled out to a big chip lead and in the final hand of the tournament, Johnson limped holding the 7♦7♥ and then moved all in after Burleson had raised with the K♠10♣. Burleson called and turned the best hand on the 6♦Q♣2♦K♠8♦ run out.

"Wish I would have played as well as I ran," Johnson tweeted afterward. "Several significant errors. Lots of room to improve. Absolutely awesome venue/location. Hope this is a yearly event!"

In addition to winning \$39,181 for finishing runner-up, Johnson took the lead in the Kimo Sabe Mezcal MSPT Season 9 Player of the Year race with 2,600 points.



## Silverado-Franklin Casino

Buy-in: \$1,100 ♣ 286 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Rick Burleson	Rapid City, SD	\$63,462
2	Aaron Johnson	Red Wing, MN	\$39,181
3	Eric Eelkema	Brooklyn Park, MN	\$28,420
4	Mark Fink	Sioux Falls, SD	\$20,970
5	Michael Campbell	Rapid City, SD	\$15,727
6	Larry Christensen	Kennebec, SD	\$12,140
7	Mark Larson	Larimore, ND	\$9,381
8	Kristopher Evans	Winner, SD	\$7,450
9	Rosie Paules	Torrington, WY	\$5,767
10	Jon Wurden	Fisher, MN	\$4,663

"I definitely learned a lot from these guys," Burleson reflected. "There wasn't a bad guy at the final table, that's for sure. Michael Campbell is one of my best friends, he's an unbelievable player. Aaron has proven he's a great player on your tour alone. The rest of the guys are great too, but those two guys were the ones I was most nervous about at the final table." 🍀



Final Table



# WHY SETTLE FOR TEQUILA?

# STEP UP TO KIMO SABE



## TRIPLE AWARD WINNER







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MID-STATES POKER TOUR

# PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Standings as of May 19, 2018

Rank	Player Name	Points
1	Aaron Johnson	3,142
2	Blake Bohn	2,400
3	Adam Friedman	2,200
4	Kfir Nahum	1,800
5	Rob WazWaz	1,750
6	Brian Zupancich	1,700
	Greg Himmelbrand	1,700
	Vincent Moscati	1,700
	Abdul Amer	1,700
10	Craig Trost	1,650
11	Mark Collins	1,600
	Max Young	1,600
	Umut Ozturk	1,600
	Matthias De Cerca	1,600
15	Eric Eelkema	1,500
	Daniel Wagner	1,500
	John Ploski	1,500
	Nathan Trenkamp	1,500
	Matthew Buhler	1,500
20	Bob Van Syckle	1,400
	Michael Lang	1,400
	Jeff Heiberg	1,400
	Osama Aweida	1,400
	Rick Bureson	1,400
	Bob Shao	1,400



**Aaron Johnson - Red Wing, MN**

◆All players who cash in a MSPT event are ranked for Player of the Year points. At the end of the calendar year, the top-ranked player will receive POY recognition, four MSPT \$1,100 Main Event buy-ins, \$250 toward a satellite or Main Event at every MSPT event the following season (max \$4,250), as well as a \$1,100 Main Event seat with \$400 travel to Venetian Mid-Season Championship - over \$10,000 value

◆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 2018, visit [www.msptpoker.com/pages/poy](http://www.msptpoker.com/pages/poy)



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## Regional Event Preview

# MSPT HEADS BACK TO MILWAUKEE'S POTAWATOMI HOTEL & CASINO JULY 7-15 FOR \$350 REGIONAL EVENT

BY CHAD HOLLOWAY

For the second time in Season 8, the MSPT is headed to Potawatomi Hotel & Casino in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This time, the downtown venue will play host to a \$350 buy-in, \$200,000 guaranteed MSPT Regional Event.

From July 7-15, a series of satellites will feed into the Regional Event, which will be held over four days from July 12-15.

The first of three flights will be held on Thursday, July 12 with Day 1A at 5 p.m. Day 1A will play 16 levels. Friday's and Saturday's Day 1B and 1C will start at 5 p.m. and 2 p.m. respectively and also play 16 levels. Players who advance to Day 2 from a previous flight are not eligible to play in a subsequent flight. The remaining players from each flight will combine on Sunday morning at 11 a.m. and play until a champion is crowned.

The MSPT has hosted four previous Regional Events at Potawatomi. The first was back in January 2016 when Oscar Arndt topped a field of 904 entries to win a \$58,964 first-place prize. Six months later, it was Vinh Tran who conquered a then record field of 1,169 entries to win \$49,944.

In January 2018, Craig Trost bested 1,228 entrants – at the time the largest tournament by attendance ever held in Wisconsin – to take home a \$63,252 prize. However, the MSPT Regional last July saw 1,658 runners take to the felt, which created the largest poker tournament ever held in Wisconsin. That tournament ended in a chop between Matthew Vignali (\$70,240) and Alexander Hill (\$60,000).

“The growth of the MSPT Regional Events at Potawatomi has been incredible,” said MSPT President Bryan Mileski. “Over the years, the venue has continued to impress, which is why it’s become one of the best casinos in the entire Midwest.”

The latest MSPT Potawatomi Regional, the fifth held at the venue, will be the 25th Regional Event since their inception at the beginning of 2015. The Regional Events are designed to offer players the opportunity to play MSPT’s lauded “Chain-saw-Approved” \$1,100 Main Event structure at a more affordable price point.

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.



**Matthew Vignali**

It has come a long way since its opening in 1991 when the Forest County Potawatomi first opened as a 45,800-square foot bingo hall, making it the first tribal off-reservation gaming operation in the country.

Aside from gaming, Potawatomi offers seven great dining options to choose from including beautiful Italian cooking at Bella Italiana, down-home cooking at Canal Street Café, and authentic Asian cuisine and sushi bar at Ruyi.

For more information on this event, visit [msptpoker.com](http://msptpoker.com). 🎰





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# MSPT

MID-STATES POKER TOUR

# MSPT EARNINGS

Leaders as of May 19, 2018

Rank	Player Name	Amount
1	Nadar Kakhmazov	\$395,888
2	Blake Bohn	\$373,270
3	Thomas Boivin	\$352,153
4	Carl Carodenuto	\$347,283
5	Richard Alsup	\$338,030
6	Aaron Massey	\$335,633
7	Brayden Gazlay	\$316,782
8	Peixin Liu	\$315,830
9	Mukul Pahuja	\$304,491
10	Rob WazWaz	\$283,584
11	Mike Shanahan	\$278,607
12	Jeremy Dresch	\$272,741
13	Jason Zarlenga	\$272,194
14	Kou Vang	\$253,648
15	Chris Meyers	\$246,936
16	Angelina Rich	\$234,829
17	Richard Bai	\$220,539
18	Keith Heine	\$220,019
19	Travis Lauson	\$216,934
20	John Hayes	\$209,395
21	Maury Solano	\$209,244
22	Andrew Rubinberg	\$204,979
23	Keven Stammen	\$202,031
24	Hao "John" Sun	\$201,718
25	Brett Blackwood	\$199,508
26	Greg Himmelbrand	\$198,868
27	Thupten Thondup	\$198,015
28	David Gonia	\$193,310
29	Aaron Johnson	\$191,949
30	Ben Marsh	\$189,438
31	Jonathan Kim	\$188,686
32	Osama Aweida	\$187,077
33	Mark Sandness	\$181,373
34	Nick Jivkov	\$180,202
35	Dan Hendrickson	\$177,256
36	Matt Kirby	\$176,265
37	Ryan Hartmann	\$173,337
38	Rodger Johnson	\$172,549
39	Drake Bronk	\$171,889
40	Michael Lang	\$171,275
41	Dan Sun	\$170,588
42	Bill Rogers	\$170,206
43	David Mowery (WI)	\$169,837
44	David Lee (TN)	\$166,822
45	Josh Reichard	\$165,116
46	Jacob Balsiger	\$157,169
47	Daniel Goepel	\$153,311
48	Jason Mirza	\$152,443
49	Craig Trost	\$151,996
50	Michael Rudolph	\$147,122



Nadar Kakhmazov - Russia

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## Event Recap

# MONKEY OFF HIS BACK: ROB WAZWAZ WINS MSPT CANTERBURY PARK FOR \$109,375 AFTER MAKING RECORD 9TH FINAL TABLE

BY CHAD HOLLOWAY

The second MSPT Season 9 \$1,100 Main Event at Canterbury Park drew a record 526 entries which not only made it the largest MSPT ever held at the venue in 16 stops, but also became the largest major poker tournament (\$1K+ buy-in) in Minnesota history.

Fittingly, the title came down to two legends in the Minnesota poker community in 40-year-old Rob Wazwaz and the state's all-time money winner Blake Bohn. Wazwaz was making his record ninth MSPT final table, and after many close calls—he finished fourth in the same event back in December and placed second in a Season 8 stop at another Minnesota location—he finally managed to claim an MSPT title, this one good for \$109,375.

“My favorite tournament I’ve ever won is this one right now, best honor ever,” Wazwaz said after the win. “Being 0-8 on the MSPT, knowing I didn’t play the ones right back then, that I wasn’t as good back then. I should’ve done better.”

He continued: “The cards I picked up were amazing, obviously I ran really hot, but I really tried hard to win this one because I couldn’t stand that I’d never won an MSPT, I just couldn’t stand it. I had to add it to my résumé, I felt it was incomplete, all the MSPT I had played without winning.”

Prior to the win, Wazwaz had \$174,209 in lifetime MSPT earnings, but he now has \$283,584, which puts him 10th on the MSPT all-time money list. It was just the latest win for Wazwaz, who has nearly \$1.3 million in lifetime earnings. Earlier this month, he won a local \$500 event for \$32,268, and last May took down the HPT Chicago for \$173,385.

Day 2 saw 94 players return to action and 40 of them left empty-handed before the money was made. Among those to bust early were 2017 Fall Poker Classic champ Dennis Stevermer, Minnesota Poker Hall of Famer Mike “Schneids” Schneider, two-time MSPT champ Jeremy Dresch, start-of-the-day chip leader Carl Carodenuto, and bubble boy Steve Alonso, who got it in with ace-jack against king-jack only to see a king spike on the river.

From there, the in-the-money finishes came quick and included former champ Jon Kim (11th - \$7,631), UCCS Mountain Lion Poker Club member Justin Cole (26th - \$3,408), Kimo Sabe Mezcal MSPT Season 8 POY Chris Meyers (30th - \$2,747), two-time MSPT champ Johnny Hayes (32nd - \$2,747), MSPT



Rob Wazwaz

Season 8 Canterbury Park champ Mark Wadekamper (43rd - \$2,493), and Aaron Johnson (45th - \$2,493), who added 75 points to his current Player of the Year lead.

Another player to cash was Kou Vang, who finished in 22nd place for \$3,917. It marked the 24th MSPT cash of his career and put him just one away from becoming the first player inducted into the MSPT Hall of Fame, which requires “a minimum of 25 MSPT Main Event Cashes and 1 MSPT Win or 1 MSPT Player of the Year” OR “a minimum of 10 MSPT Main Event Final Tables (Wazwaz now has 9) and 1 MSPT Win or 1 MSPT Player of the Year.” Vang won the MSPT Season 2 Canterbury Park for \$64,645.

### Final Table Action

The final table began with four players over seven figures and the rest shorter. That made for some interesting table dynamics and a lot of action.

Rob Maier was the first to fall after getting his short stack in with the  $A\heartsuit K\heartsuit$  and failing to win a race against Bohn's  $10\heartsuit 10\clubsuit$ . Not long after, 18-year-old high school student and top-ranked Minnesota chess player Peyton Smith scored a double elimination when he called two all-ins holding the  $9\clubsuit 9\clubsuit$ . Vlad Tkachuk had the  $7\heartsuit 7\clubsuit$  and Barbara Sargent the  $A\heartsuit K\heartsuit$ , but neither were able to crack the nines after a  $J\heartsuit 4\spadesuit 6\spadesuit 8\spadesuit 6\clubsuit$  run out.

Wazwaz then put a bad beat on Ryan Hartmann, who was at



# Canterbury Park

his fifth MSPT final table. Hartmann got it in with the A♦K♥ against the K♦Q♦ of Wazwaz, but a Q♣7♦Q♦K♠J♦ flop sent him out the door in seventh place for \$16,279.

The short-stacked Robert Mitchell then took his leave in sixth place, and MSPT Season 2 Northern Lights champ Tom Stambaugh followed him out the door in fifth. It happened when Stambaugh jammed his last 10 big blinds with the Q♣J♠ and got called by Smith's 8♦8♥. The board came 5♥J♦9♦7♦10♣ and that was all she wrote for Stambaugh.

Brian Zupancich, who was making his first final table appearance after playing the tour for the better part of seven years, then ran his pocket eights smack dab into Wazwaz's aces to fall in fourth place for \$36,628.

The final three players all had a lot of chips, but Wazwaz pulled away when he and Smith clashed. The former had pocket kings and the latter Big Slick. Wazwaz just called a three-bet and a bet on the flop before jamming over the top of a big turn bet for Smith, who was forced to fold. Wazwaz then finished off Smith with the 5♦5♥ against the wunderkind's A♥K♥. The board ran out Q♣7♠J♣9♦8♠ and Smith missed to bust in third place for \$48,430.

Heads-up play was a short affair given Wazwaz's insurmountable chip lead. Eventually, he jammed the button with the 2♣2♥ and Bohn called off with the K♠5♦. The board ran out J♣9♠8♠J♥7♠ and Bohn had to settle for second place and \$67,203.

That brought Bohn's MSPT lifetime earnings up to \$373,270, second only to MSPT Venetian champ Nader Kakhmazov's



## Canterbury Park

Buy-in: \$1,100 ♣ 526 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Rob WazWaz	Minneapolis, MN	\$109,375
2	Blake Bohn	Eden Prairie, MN	\$67,203
3	Peyton Smith	Eagan, MN	\$48,430
4	Brian Zupancich	Silver Bay, MN	\$36,628
5	Tom Stambaugh	Nevis, MN	\$27,471
6	Robert Mitchell	Salt Lake City, UT	\$20,858
7	Ryan Hartmann	Minneapolis, MN	\$16,279
8	Barbara Sargent	Fort Worth, TX	\$12,718
9	Vlad Tkachuk	Ukraine	\$9,666
10	Rob Maier	Little Canada, MN	\$7,631

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"He's the best," Wazwaz said of Bohn. "It was akin to defeating a great athlete. In all fairness, I caught way better cards than Blake. I owe it all to Blake for buying me drinks. First time of all my MSPT final tables I've ever drank. I knew when he offered I had to change it up and here I am."

The MSPT will return to Canterbury Park in August for a \$350 Regional Event, the same tournament last year that set the record for largest poker tournament by attendance (1,169 entries) in Minnesota history. 🍀



Final Table

# TIME TO GET YOUR **GAME FACE** ON



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## Industry Insiders

# POKER MEDIA VETERAN DIANA MONNETTE ON THE VENETIAN BEAT

BY CHAD HOLLOWAY

If you've spent time at The Venetian, chances are you've crossed paths with Diana Monnette, who tackles all things media for the room. A veteran of the poker industry, she was previously known as Diana Cox before her marriage to poker pro and high-stakes grinder "Angry" John Monnette.



Diana Monnette

Born and raised in Oregon, Monnette grew up in a small town where her and her older sister both attended the same high school as their parents. While in college, she worked some retail and office jobs, coached a high school dance team and taught tumbling and dance classes while she attempted to figure out what she really wanted to do in life.

She eventually cheered and danced for a semi-pro basketball team for a season, and also worked as a reporter for a couple of newspapers. As for poker, it was a game she learned from her father, and she would inherit his passion.

"My father passed away from cholangiocarcinoma in 2014," says Monnette. "He was a fan of poker, playing for fun whenever he could outside of running his own business for 30 years. I remember him watching it on TV during the MoneyMaker year—as does just about everyone else, but I actually did not pay much attention to it at the time. Poker would come to be something we would bond over during the last years of his life and it still brings me a lot of bittersweet feelings to this day."

### A Chance Job Opportunity

At the age of 24, Monnette was bored with her life and she moved to Las Vegas on a whim. Then, in 2008, she stumbled across an ad that would change the course of her life.

"I was browsing the Craigslist job section and saw an ad that sparked my interest—BLUFF Magazine was looking to fill some temporary staff positions for the World Series of Poker. I reached out via email, was asked to come in for an

interview and was hired for the summer."

She had training as a journalist, but as far as poker was concerned she had to learn a lot as she went along. She obviously did a good job as she'd return to BLUFF for subsequent WSOPs, and also did stints with both the World Poker Tour and CardPlayer.

### Joining the Venetian Team

In 2015, Venetian Poker Room Manager Tommy LaRosa reached out to Monnette with an idea. He was looking for someone to utilize social media to promote the room, communicate with players and guests, and make information about the room and tournaments readily and easily available.

To add another level of player appreciation, including live updates from major final tables and the promotion of players who win single-day tournaments, the room brought Monnette on board in December of that year.

"I don't know of any other room that offers lower buy-in, big guarantee tournaments year-round the way The Venetian does," she says of the room. "What I think is special about that is it allows recreational and semi-professional players to play for large paydays without having to put up massive entry costs."

Monnette also credits guarantees on every tournament and the room's willingness to offer value to their guests as reasons for the room's success, thought she doesn't take advantage of such things.

"I like to joke that one poker player per family is enough," Monnette responds when asked if she ever plays poker. "I'm pretty risk adverse and knowing I'm not a favorite to win, I just choose not to do it the majority of the time. I enjoy and appreciate the game for the mental aspect of it and I could see myself enjoying some of the smaller tournaments, but it's just not something I make time for outside of work and my hobbies."

While she doesn't play, Monnette can't imagine her life without poker.

"This year marks 10 years of being in the poker industry for me—the time has gone by so incredibly fast when I think back on it—and the idea of moving on to something else is actually a little scary," she says when asked what she'd be doing if she wasn't in poker.

Follow Diana at @DianaMonnette. 🍀

# Summer Slam 2018



## Tournament Schedule July 19th-29th

TIME	EVENT	TOURNAMENT	GUARANTEE	B+E+S	CHIPS. LEVELS	ENTER/ RE-ENTER
<b>THURSDAY, JULY 19TH</b>						
11am	1	\$1,000 NLH Deep Stack High Roller * 1 Re-entry, Big Blind Ante	<b>1st place \$20k GTD</b>	\$910+\$90	100K/30	8*8
<b>FRIDAY, JULY 20TH</b>						
10am	2	\$200 No Limit Hold'em Flight A	<b>\$50,000</b>	\$170+\$30	15K/30	8*8
6pm	2	\$200 No Limit Hold'em Flight B				
<b>SATURDAY, JULY 21ST</b>						
10am	2	\$200 No Limit Hold'em Flight C	<b>\$50,000</b>	\$170+\$30	15K/30	8*8
6pm	2	\$200 No Limit Hold'em Flight D				
<b>SUNDAY, JULY 22ND</b>						
12pm	2	\$200 Day 2	<b>\$50,000</b>	~	~/40	~
1pm	3	\$150 No Limit Hold'em	<b>\$10,000</b>	\$125+\$25	10K/30	8*8
<b>MONDAY, JULY 23RD</b>						
5pm	4	\$120 No Limit Hold'em	<b>\$10,000</b>	\$100+\$20	10K/20	9*9
<b>TUESDAY, JULY 24TH</b>						
5pm	5	\$120 No Limit Hold'em	<b>\$10,000</b>	\$100+\$20	10K/20	9*9
<b>WEDNESDAY, JULY 25TH</b>						
5pm	6	\$120 No Limit Hold'em	<b>\$10,000</b>	\$100+\$20	10K/20	9*9
<b>THURSDAY, JULY 26TH</b>						
11am	7	\$300 Pot Limit Omaha	<b>\$15,000</b>	\$265+\$35	20K/30	8*8
3pm	8	\$600 No Limit Hold'em Main Event Day 1a	<b>\$200,000</b>	\$550+\$50	30K/40	10*10
<b>FRIDAY, JULY 27TH</b>						
11am	8	\$600 No Limit Hold'em Main Event Day 1b	<b>\$200,000</b>	\$550+\$50	30K/40	10*10
<b>SATURDAY, JULY 28TH</b>						
11am	8	\$600 No Limit Hold'em Main Event Day 1c	<b>\$200,000</b>	\$550+\$50	30K/40	10*10
<b>SUNDAY, JULY 29TH</b>						
11am	8	Day 2 \$600 Main Event	<b>\$200,000</b>	~	~/40	~
2pm	9	\$300 No Limit Hold'em	<b>\$15,000</b>	\$265+\$35	20K/30	8*8

Winners are responsible for all applicable taxes and fees. Residents of foreign countries will be subject to 30% withholdings on all payouts. Seneca Gaming and Entertainment reserves the right to modify or discontinue these events at any time without notice. SG&E will not be responsible in the event of a typographical error, misinformation on the website or printed material pertaining to this event and players will have no claim in these matters. 350 players max for each flight. The cage will be responsible for all cash transactions. Tournament fee are non-transferable and non-refundable without management approval. All information contained in the parameter that SGA approves is consistent with information contained in all promotional material. The \$120, \$150, \$200 & \$300 events will have 5% withheld for tournament staff. The \$600 will have 3% withheld for tournament staff. The \$1,000 will have 1.5% withheld for tournament staff. The entry fee will be held by the Casino as revenue.

Niagara Falls Poker Room 310 4th Street • Niagara Falls, NY 14303 • 877-8-SENECA • 716-278-6300



## Event Preview

# MSPT ADDS BRAND NEW STOP AT SENECA NIAGARA CASINO SEPTEMBER 15-23

BY MSPT POKER STAFF

If you've ever wanted an excuse to see Niagara Falls, you'll have the opportunity come September. That's because the MSPT has added a new stop in Season 9.

From September 15-23, the MSPT will visit New York for the first time. A series of satellites will feed into a \$1,100 buy-in, \$200K GTD Main Event at Seneca Niagara Casino in Niagara Falls, New York, which isn't far off from Buffalo.

The official schedule will be released in the future, but it's never too early to mark out the dates for what's sure to be a great stop.

Seneca Niagara Casino has a rich poker history and has hosted events like the Western New York Poker Challenge, Summer Slam, and Fall Poker Classic. It's there that a number of players have risen to prominence including Andy Spears, Dan Wagner, and Kimo Sabe Mezcal MSPT Season 8 Player of the Year Chris Meyers.

"I'm very excited the MSPT is coming to my home casino," Meyers said of the announcement. "There are a lot of great players at Seneca Niagara Casino, and I can't wait until they get to experience one of the country's best poker tours."

MSPT President Bryan Mileski echoed those sentiments: "I had the opportunity to visit Seneca Niagara Casino in Decem-

ber and was thoroughly impressed with the property, especially the recently-expanded poker room. Not only will this stop offer great poker action, there's plenty to see and do with Niagara Falls minutes away. It's a destination experience."

Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino is a full-amenity resort featuring 604 rooms and suites. With ten restaurants, seven shops, more than 3,000 slots and over 80 table games, live poker, keno, a full-service spa, flexible meeting facilities, rewarding promotions, superstar entertainment and exciting nightlife, Seneca Niagara is consistently rated as a must-see Niagara Falls casino.

Every year, the prestigious gaming magazine, Casino Player, recognizes the top performers in the gaming industry based on player feedback. Among the awards Seneca Niagara has won are Best Hotel Rooms, Best Spa, Favorite Casino Resort to Vacation at, and Best Dealers.

For more information, visit [senecaniagaracasino.com](http://senecaniagaracasino.com) or follow them on Twitter @SNFPoker and @SenecaCasinos. Continue to check out [msptpoker.com](http://msptpoker.com) for the full schedule once released as well as discounts on lodging and Delta airfare. 🎰





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Day-1A: Wed. June 20.....6:30 PM  
Day-1B: Thurs. June 21.....6:30 PM  
Day-1C: Fri. June 22.....10:30 AM  
Day-1D: Fri. June 22.....5:00 PM  
Day-1E: Sat. June 23.....5:00 PM  
Day-2: Sun. June 24.....12:30 PM

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July 20-28

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# Regional Event Recap

## AARON JOHNSON EXTENDS POY LEAD WITH MSPT GRAND FALLS REGIONAL WIN

BY CHAD HOLLOWAY

Aaron Johnson has been on fire through the first five months of 2018, and it continued at the MSPT's latest visit to Grand Falls Casino & Golf Resort just outside Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

His remarkable run started back in February when he final tabled the MSPT Canterbury Park and finished fourth for \$34,183. A month later, he took 32nd in the MSPT Potawatomi, and then followed that up with a runner-up finish in the 2018 MSPT South Dakota State Poker Championship for \$39,181.

Toss in a 45th-place finish in the second MSPT Canterbury Park of the season, and Johnson had pulled out to a nice lead in the Kimo Sabe Mezcal MSPT Season 9 Player of the Year race. That doesn't even take into account the HPT event he won back in March.

In May, Johnson navigated a field of 358 entries to take down the MSPT Grand Falls Casino \$350 Regional Event working a heads-up chop for \$21,268 (first place was scheduled to pay \$23,975). It was a long overdue win for Johnson, who prior to it had 22 MSPT Main Event cashes (including five final tables) and five Regional Event cashes.

"It feels amazing. It was soul-crushing to finish runner-up at Deadwood a few weeks ago, but I always try to keep things positive and strive on," Johnson said after the win. "Lo and behold I ship an MSPT regional two weeks later! Now I just need to get my paws on a Main Event title."

Among those to cash the tournament were MSPT Season 3 Main Event champ Moon Ahmed (24th - \$833), MSPT Season 6 Regional champ Joel Klipping (18th - \$1,198), and Travis Gant (9th - \$2,177), who in 2017 topped a field of 426 entries to win the inaugural MSPT Grand Falls Regional for \$29,782.

In the final hand of the tournament, Breck got his stack all in pre flop holding the Q♦6♣ against the A♠8♥ of Johnson. The



Aaron Johnson



### Grand Falls Casino

Buy-in: \$350 ♣ 358 Entrants

Place	Name	City, State	Prize
1	Aaron Johnson	Red Wing, MN	\$21,268*
2	Matthew Breck	Sioux Falls, SD	\$17,500*
3	Derek Dekok	Sioux Falls, SD	\$10,730
4	Truman Johnson	Caddo Mills, TX	\$7,917
5	David Swanholm	Fargo, ND	\$5,938
6	Justin Barnum	Fargo, ND	\$4,583
7	Steve Belland	Bagley, MN	\$3,542
8	Hung Thai	Sioux Falls, SD	\$2,812
9	Travis Gant	Geddes, SD	\$2,177
10	Travis Devericks	Sioux Falls, SD	\$1,760

\*Denotes chop amount

board ran out 4♥K♣2♦2♠10♣ and Breck hit the rail in second place while Johnson got his long-awaited MSPT victory.

"I've been hit hard by a wave of massive positive variance, that's undoubtedly the biggest factor," Johnson said of his recent heater. "However, I've been putting in a ton of work on and off the felt. Lots of studying, regular exercise, trying to eat a healthy diet, striving for a positive mindset. If you prepare properly and put in the work, good things can happen."

The MSPT will return to Grand Falls Casino August 18-26 for a \$1,100 buy-in, \$150K GTD Main Event. Check out mspt-poker.com for updates. 🍀



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*Strategy presented by Jonathan Little*

## MSPT STRATEGY: 2018 SOUTH DAKOTA STATE POKER CHAMPIONSHIP CAME DOWN TO A TOUGH DECISION

BY CHAD HOLLOWAY

In the 2018 MSPT South Dakota State Poker Championship at Deadwood's Silverado-Franklin Casino, the 286-entry field was down to the final two players when a big hand developed.

It began with the blinds at 30,000/60,000/10,000 when poker pro Aaron Johnson (1.8 million) raised to 120,000 on the button with the  $Q\heartsuit 8\heartsuit$  and amateur Rick Burleson (3.7 million) three-bet to 260,000 holding the  $8\clubsuit 7\clubsuit$ .

When the flop came down  $6\heartsuit 8\heartsuit 4\clubsuit$ , Burleson bet 300,000 and Johnson called. The  $J\clubsuit$  turn saw Burleson fire out 500,000 and again Johnson just called to see the  $J\heartsuit$  on the river. Burleson moved all in and Johnson tanked for roughly three minutes before folding the winner. He was left with 845,000 after the hand.

Ultimately, Burleson went on to win the tournament for \$63,462 while Johnson finished as runner-up for \$39,181. Had he made the call, chances are things would've went the other way. We consulted poker pro Jonathan Little of PokerCoaching.com about the hand.

**MSPT:** *If you were in Burleson's shoes, what would you have done on the flop and why?*

**Little:** First off, I would essentially never three-bet  $8\clubsuit 7\clubsuit$  from out of position heads-up. It plays quite well as a call because it will be able to continue on many flops. Also, given the stack sizes, it is somewhat likely that Johnson will go all in over a three-bet, forcing 8-7 suited to fold away its equity, which is a bit of a disaster.

On the flop, I would tend to bet small, perhaps 200,000 into the 540,000 pot. This is an excellent flop for 8-7 and the main goal should be extracting value from worse made hands while forcing various over cards to either fold or make a speculative call. As you bet bigger, it becomes more difficult to get value from the worse made hands and the over cards will rarely make the mistake of calling.

**MSPT:** *Same question regarding the turn?*

**Little:** I would tend to check the turn. If you bet and get action, you will usually be against a better made hand or a hand that has a ton of outs, both of which are not great results. I think a much better play would be to check, looking to check-call a bet. I would have also checked the river to induce bluffs from busted draws.



**Rick Burleson vs. Aaron Johnson**

**MSPT:** *In your opinion, was the river decision a tough spot for Johnson?*

**Little:** I think Johnson had a fairly easy call on the river. When all of the draws miss, you simply cannot fold your best made hands. Johnson should realize in this spot that his  $Q\heartsuit 8\heartsuit$  is one of the best hands in his range. The only justification for this fold would be if he thinks Burleson essentially never bluffs or overvalues a worse made hand. He probably had some sort of read that Burleson liked his hand, which he did. It just so happened that he thought he was vastly overvaluing his decent, but non-nut pair.

**MSPT:** *Johnson seemed to believe that, while he was down in chips, he had the experience and knowledge advantage. By folding, he was still left with 14 bb and likely figured he could find a better spot.*

**Little:** With 14 big blinds, unless your opponent is horrible, if you have an edge, it will be minuscule. You should generally look to avoid close spots if you think you will have many better spots in the future. With 14 big blinds heads-up, it is quite optimistic to think you have lots of time to slowly grind away your opponent.

Most of the time, you will be all in within the next few hands, meaning the idea of "waiting for a better spot" essentially does not apply. This concept mainly applies to heads-up poker when you are playing with very deep stacks and your opponent is either extremely tight/passive (you can slowly blind them down) or overly loose/aggressive (you can frequently bluff catch for lots of chips). 🎲

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