

Harrah's signs deal with PokerTek

by Ryan McLane, Casino City

Harrah's Entertainment made PokerTek its official automated poker table company Thursday, agreeing to use the PokerPro table in any future electronic installations at their gaming properties worldwide.

Included in the agreement was the right for PokerTek to use the World Series of Poker brand on their tables. PokerTek founder Lou White said the two elements of the agreement will help spread both brands across the globe.

Harrah's operates 50 casinos in 13 states and six countries. White said he's not sure which properties will implement his electronic tables.

„We believe that there is a market for automated poker throughout our properties,“ said Harrah's table games chief Gerry Tuthill in a statement. „Poker continues to boom and many players who have learned the game enjoy the fast paced action PokerPro tables offer.“

The PokerPro tables will not appear during 2007 WSOP tournaments. But White does believe that PokerTek tables may have a niche in WSOP tournament structure, especially considering Harrah's is adding a heads up tournament to the 2007 schedule.

White said his heads up PokerPro tables are a natural fit for the heads up event because it erases the burden of using one dealer for every two players and speeds up an event that can take days to complete.

„I believe you might see our tables at the 2008 WSOP,“ White

said.

The second part of the agreement will allow PokerTek to sell WSOP branded tables.

PokerTek's arrangement to sell WSOP-branded tables is similar to an agreement it has with the World Poker Tour that has seen some success. Carnival Cruise lines, one of the largest PokerTek accounts, currently offers WPT-branded poker tables on some of their ships, allowing customers to play poker rather than a cruises' traditional table-gambling games, White said.

„We welcome the opportunity to extend the reach of the World Series of Poker through this arrangement,“ said WSOP Commissioner Jeffrey Pollack. „The WSOP is the number one brand in poker, and PokerTek is a welcome addition to our team.“

Harrah's did not return a Casino City calls Friday for additional information on the agreement.