

# The November Nine is Set

The remaining participants are putting their chips into safekeeping for 117 days, banking their cheques for the USD 900,670 9th place prize money they are all guaranteed and going off in search of coaching, publicity, endorsement deals and appearances on the Letterman show.

When Jeffrey Pollack, Commissioner of the World Series of Poker, first announced the plans to delay the play of the final table of the Main Event, reaction in the poker world ran the gamut. There were those who expressed genuine concern for the well being of the players and integrity of the game, those whose response could best be described as something akin to reactionary hostility and those, typically the better known, more public faces in poker, who thought it was a tremendous idea. In his blog on Full Contact Poker, Daniel Negreanu said „If you are a poker player and love the WSOP, you should actually be rooting for this idea to work because it is in your best interest“.

The aim of the experiment is clear – in the words of Jeffrey Pollack „Our intent is to provide an even stronger tournament for all poker players and the entire poker industry. Now fans will ask ‚who will win‘ our coveted championship bracelet and millions of dollars instead of ‚Who won?‘ The excitement and interest that will surround our final nine players will be unprecedented“. It is hoped that in delaying the final table and producing the broadcast for air the day after the final table is completed, the presentation will be more in line with other „sports“ coverage in the States. It is also hoped that the so-called „November Nine“ will be interesting enough to the world’s entertainment and sporting media that there is a lot of coverage in the run up to the event.

Whether that comes to pass remains in question, as most of the nine are relatively unknown to the typical poker fan, and

certainly not to the casual observer. How Harrahs and ESPN must have mourned Phil Hellmuth's knock out in 45th place, and cursed the nine on the turn when Mike Mattusow's AJ lost to A9 on the AAX9x board knocking the Mouth out in 30th.

However, going into the event, Jeffrey Pollack and his team must have known that the numbers were stacked against them in terms of getting a recognisable player or two on the final table – with 6844 runners, it was always likely to be nine preciously unknown faces that made the November Nine. As it is they have not done too badly – there is a good mix of complete amateurs – the chip leader Dennis Phillips for example – young internet whizzkids like Craig „CraigMarq“ Marquis and Peter Eastgate and old (or at least medium-old!) school pros like David „Chino“ Rheem. Scott Montgomery has made a televised final table on the World Poker Tour, finishing fifth at this year's LA Poker Classic which saw Phil Ivey finally take home a WPT title, so he won't be a complete unknown to TV poker fans.

It is hard to say exactly how the success or otherwise of this project will be measured. On one hand there is the question of ratings for the ESPN telecast of this broadcast. If it is substantially up on previous years, and last year in particular, then that can definitely be argued to be quantifiable proof of success. On the other hand there is the attendance in tournaments – this year's WSOP has been extremely well attended and it will be interesting to see if there is a boost in next year's main event entrants on the back of the delayed final table. Most of all though, there is the qualitative and hard to measure matter of public interest in poker and the poker world, and it may take quite some time before it is clear whether there has been an impact on that.

So, good luck to the „November Nine“ – here's hoping you are all part of something which is remembered as a positive milestone in poker history, and not as part of a well meaning experiment that went awry.

## The Final Table:

1. Dennis Phillips 26,295,000
2. Ivan Demidov 24,400,000
3. Scott Montgomery 19,690,000
4. Peter Eastgate 18,375,000
5. Craig Marquis 10,210,000
6. Ylon Schwartz 12,520,000
7. Darus Suharto 12,520,000
8. David Rheem 10,230,000
9. Kelly Kim 2,620,000

## Final Table Payouts:

1. USD 9,119,517 1st
2. USD 5,790,024 2nd
3. USD 4,503,352 3rd
4. USD 3,763,515 4th
5. USD 3,088,012 5th
6. USD 2,412,510 6th
7. USD 1,769,174 7th
8. USD 1,286,672 8th
9. USD 900,670 9th