

# FULL TILT MAGAZINE

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ALL THINGS POKER THROUGHOUT THE CENTRAL UNITED STATES



Amir Vahedi

Winning Sit & Go's  
The PokerPro Table  
Poker Counselor  
JetSetPoker  
HPT Results  
RedFish



5 Huge Days of Poker Action  
Find out more inside...



## The Future of Ring Game Poker?



*"There are currently 6600 poker tables in the world and I am very confident there will come a time when 75% of them are automated. PokerTek has an opportunity to have either all of that market, or most of that market."*

*- Lou White, CEO of PokerTek*

As the demand for poker within casinos grows, so does the demand on the casinos to adapt to the overwhelming number of people playing the game. PokerTek, Inc., a software development and engineering company based in Matthews, North Carolina, believes it has an answer to many of the problems facing the casinos in today's market – the PokerPro table. PokerPro combines the interactive benefits of traditional poker with the advantages of computer and graphics technology. Utilizing electronic cards and chips, the PokerPro table is a completely new way of playing poker.

### The Benefits

According to Lou White, CEO of PokerTek, Inc., "To us it's simply a question of technology adoption. Technology is kind of like water, it finds its place. A computer is the ultimate poker dealer, and it's different agreed, but it's better. It will take time for the players to experience it and understand the benefits and, whether it takes five years or ten years, there will come a time when the vast majority of poker tables in the world are automated because it just makes too much sense for the casino and the players".

When asked why it makes so much sense for the player, White had this to say. "For the player, you can only make money when you are in a poker hand, you spend most of your time folding. Because the PokerPro table is 60% faster, you get the opportunity to play 60% more hands. If you win money over time playing poker, then you'll make 60% more money. That's number one."

"Number two. You've seen what happens at a poker table. The types of mistakes are endless, and when a mistake does happen and a decision is finally made someone wins and someone loses, somebody's happy and somebody's mad. This table eliminates all the mistakes. It won't allow a mistake to happen."

"And number three. There is nobody to tip at the end of the hand. Now take a semi-professional poker player that's playing 20 to 30 hours a week, maybe grinding out \$30,000 or \$40,000 a year. They're

paying out \$5,000 in tips. Take a professional player that is playing 40 hours a week. They're paying out \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year, which could be 10 to 20% of their total income. For the poker player that wins money over time, it's simple economics."

And for the casinos? "For the casinos themselves it's even more simple. Revenue goes up 60% and expenses go down dramatically", says White.

### How does it work

Along with the PokerPro table comes a simple process for checking in when you get to the poker room. When you enter the poker room, you'll go to a kiosk where you will swipe your card, pick your game, and your name will be added to an automated list. When your seat becomes available, it locks that seat for you automatically at the table by putting your name on it and then displays where your seat is located on a screen. This eliminates all of the confusion of dealers yelling out "Open seat on ten!" and "Lock it up Sid!" This just simply goes away.

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[PokerPro]

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“On a manual table we know a seat is open, but we don’t know who sat there. The casino can’t get true player tracking. This system gives the casino perfect information on who is playing where and when,” White said.

“It’s an account based system. A player goes to the brush and creates an account which is backed up with a picture of his license and a pin. Once that account is established, they simply put money in that account at the cage. So let’s say I have \$400 in my account. I go on the automated waiting list, I get sat, I swipe my card at the table. It says ‘Lou, you have \$400 in your account, how much do you want to bring to the table.’ You say \$200, now you have \$200 in chips at the table and \$200 in your account. When you leave, the money is automatically put back in your account and you can go to the cage and cash it out or since people tend to play in the same poker rooms consistently, you can just leave it in your account and come back and play the next day.”

“You look at some of the \$5/\$10 games and there are mountains of chips on the table and it’s a hassle to carry them around. Now it’s very easy, you sit down, bring in your money, and you play poker.”

As far as game play itself, each hand begins with the deck being shuffled and fixed. Unlike many online sites which use a flutter shuffle (just because an 8 of clubs came on the turn doesn’t mean an 8 of clubs would have come out), the PokerPro table uses a true fixed deck so it is determined at the beginning of the hand what cards are coming out.

Each player at the table has his own monitor on which to view the cards. When the cards are dealt, the cards you see on your screen are face down. It is each player’s responsibility to protect their hole cards so when you want to view your cards you cup your hands over the cards on your monitor and view an animation of the cards rolling up. Let go and it’s the back of the cards again.

The technology also allows a casino to run timed games, where as with manual tables it is almost impossible to run a timed game. The casino has the option to run a timed game or not, it’s their choice – and they can set the timer at whatever they want. “If you look at internet poker, some of the speed tournaments and what not, I think there is a market for even a live ring game where you have ten seconds to make a decision. They can let the customers decide what they want,” says White.

An idea is born

When asked where the idea for the PokerPro table came from, White replied “I would probably have to say that it was Lyle Berman’s idea. As Lyle [PokerTek Chairman of the Board] always says, ‘An idea without action is just a dream’. We were actually meeting with Lyle on another business concept in the fall of 2003, and in that meeting he brought forth his idea about this table. We loved it and we worked out a deal and got it built, so I’ll have to give him credit for the idea and he’ll have to give us credit for pulling it off.”

“We are in six casinos right now [in Florida and Oklahoma], a total of 21 tables, and we are not doing anymore installs this year. There is, however, a lot of activity scheduled for next year [2006] – in other states as well as in other countries,” White said. “We made a conscious decision as a company. We certainly had the opportunity to put it in a lot more places, but I think it is a common mistake that technology companies make. They invent some great technology and they get excited about it and the market gets excited about it, and they get to volume too quickly and lack when it comes to implementation and support. I want to make sure all those pieces are in place before we really get to volume. That’s what 2005 was all about, making sure we understood what was involved as far as implementation, support, and training. Now we understand all of that and we are ready to pump up the volume.”

“We will probably have between 100 and 150 tables installed during 2006 and within the next four years we will have between 800 and 1600 [tables].”

White adds, “Do I see Poker Pro being played on the final table of the World Series anytime soon? No. Is there a way for an operator to use this technology to get through the masses on the way to the final table? Absolutely.”

View from the River

The Dude and the Ditzzy Broad

By John “Gator” Von

(Disclaimer: I want to apologize to the lady readers for the use of the term Ditzzy Broad; however, to portray the correct image the word is necessary.)

Some time ago I was at the main table at the Leelanau Sands Casino (my home casino). It was not a particularly good evening weather wise so not all of the seats were filled at the table. A young man (the Dude) somewhere around 30 years old came in. Mike, the floor manager, gave him a seat at the table. We generally introduce ourselves, but the Dude didn’t seem to believe in these amenities - so be it.

We were playing \$4/\$8 Texas Hold’em. When the Dude sat in, the pots were not too large, maybe \$60-\$70, and chip counts were pretty equal - I was up maybe \$125, Coach was up \$160, and Bill was down a bit. His play was not spectacular; in fact it was nondescript. He was drinking beer and occasionally would bet or raise. After a few hands he had to buy in for more chips; however, looking back, he didn’t buy in for very many.

Enter the Ditzzy Broad. She was the Dude’s fiancé (offering up the information that they were getting married). She was not a knockout except that she did have enough of a rack to make you look twice. She was dressed in tight jeans with a sweater top (I guess I noticed more than I thought). She came in to inform the Dude she was playing the slots. He wished her luck and off she went.

About 15 minutes later, the Ditzzy Broad was back saying she had lost all of her money. This time the Dude asked her to play. She weakly protested with the usual, “I don’t know that much about the game” and the now classic, “I just watch it on TV”. Well, wonder of wonders, she sat in, to the left of the Dude.

Things appeared to be going normally, but soon the Ditzzy Broad was winning a substantial number of pots. It was Coach who caught on to the scam, and a scam it was. It was not too sophisticated, but effective at a table where this type of play is indeed a rarity, yet obvious once we were looking for it. The Dude would bet and raise into Ditzzy’s hand and then fold on the turn or river. He was also giving her information through his betting.

It didn’t take long until my stack, and the others, were in the Dude’s and the Ditzzy Broad’s hands, giving them about \$450 in about an hour’s work. Mike called me over and whispered to me that they were running a surveillance tape on them, but we solved the problem quickly by leaving the table en masse, leaving the Dude and the Ditzzy Broad alone. Having no one else at the table they left without much protest or question about what had happened. About a month later they were back for about two minutes before security came in. Funny, haven’t seen them since.

Although this happens rarely, it is good to know that not every player at the table is as they seem; instead of being the fish, they are the fishermen.

For now, see you on the River.

NOTE: Please send your comments, suggestions, and stories to me at Vonagency@yahoo.com. Visit my website at www.TheGatorGotcha.com. If I use your story or idea you will receive an autographed Gator card, suitable for framing.