

The Flop

Podunk Poker

The Small Town Poker Tour is coming to the airwaves soon. The television show will feature everyday people competing in poker tournaments across the country in an effort to find the best amateur poker player in America.

The show will add a new grass-roots look at the nation's fastest growing card game, Texas hold'em, while also raising money for charity along the way.

The show will give 100 percent of the raised money to charity, and the winner of each event will play in the Small Town Poker Tour Finals, for cash and prizes.

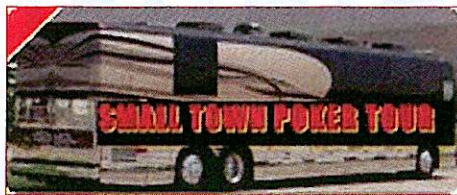
Matt Savage, a world-renowned poker tournament director, will oversee the game aspect of the program, and some as-of-yet unnamed top pros will also serve in an advisory role.

In addition to focusing on amateur players, the tournament will differ from other televised productions by staying away from the flashy set productions and lush casinos, according to Mark Fracalossi, CEO of AMT Media LLC, which is partnering with Make It Happen Productions to produce the show.

"Our show is unique," he said. "The finals will be in a casino, but the rest of the show is a tour of America. Our goal is to make this a fund-raising machine for the towns we visit."

The STPT also plans to launch tours in Europe, Canada and Asia as part of a worldwide marketing strategy.

"We are serious about making the STPT the finest amateur poker tour in the world," Fracalossi said.



Poker Tours Go Global

The two leading U.S. poker tournaments are now reaching for recognition around the world.

World Poker Tour Enterprises, Inc. (WPTE) is betting that it can duplicate the success of its World Poker Tour around with world—with local nuances and languages as diverse as Chinese, Russian and Arabic.

WPTE recently announced global expansion with two licensing agreements to stage regional versions in Canada and the Philippines, where the company has been

broadcasting its tournaments to huge ratings. Steve Lipscomb, CEO and founder of WPTE, said the company concluded agreements with ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., the largest integrated media company in the Philippines, and Aidan Tracy, a

Canadian promotion expert, to offer mini-tournament WPT tours in card rooms and casinos in their respective countries beginning in 2006.

With the Philippines and Canada deals completed, the company is now looking for other countries to bring onboard.

"Our shows are already a hit in 116 countries and territories where our syndicated shows from seasons one through three are air-

ing," said Steve Lipscomb, CEO and founder of WPTE. "Just think what kind of success a locally produced World Poker Tour will have both in regional participation and, for a network or global media player, in viewership, promotional opportunities, advertising revenue and more. It's like launching a local version of the NBA in the early years when more creative deals were possible."

Harrah's and the World Series of Poker (WSOP) are also looking increasing their prominence in the global market, as well. Harrah's recently signed a

deal with the CIRSA Corporation to hold WSOP satellite poker tournaments in Latin America. Under the agreement, CIRSA will organize the Majestic Poker Tour in its casinos in Latin America, and can send the winners to the WSOP main event in Las

Vegas. CIRSA will host tournaments in Santo Domingo, Peru, Venezuela and Panama beginning in February 2006.

"We are pleased to welcome CIRSA Corporation to the World Series of Poker family," said Jeffrey Pollack, vice president of sports and entertainment for Harrah's. "This is an important first step in our new international growth strategy."



Poker Rooms Ocean-to-Ocean

The Las Vegas Hilton debuted its new poker room inside its SuperBook in September.

The Hilton spreads \$3-6 and \$4-8 limit Texas hold'em, \$1-2 and \$2-5 no-limit hold'em and \$4-8 and \$10-20 Omaha hi/lo. Free poker lessons are available Mondays through Thursdays, a royal flush progressive jackpot starts at \$2,500 and comps of \$1 per hour can add up.

"This exciting new poker room meets the needs of both our local customers and our guests from around the world with the most popular games," Ari Mizrachi, Hilton poker room manager said. "It's part of our expanding gaming product and it makes us competitive in this vital segment."



Across the pond in England, an upscale, member's only poker club is set to open the country's first licensed, stand-alone card room in early 2006.

"We wanted to open a club dedicated to poker that was legally allowed to offer the full range of poker, properly regulated and in a secure environment," club founder Chris North said.

The Fox Poker Club in Mayfair, central London, will be one of the largest card rooms in the country and will host high-stakes, no-limit ring games, and will be the location of the final table for some major poker tournaments.