

114 Reasons

Looking back on the four-month gap from bubble to final table, Richard Marcus examines how the time off during the WSOP Main Event might have helped a cheating game plan.



Let's look at the most important element in creating not only a WSOP Final Table cheating scam, but any scam: time.

The greater the period of time, the more of it there is not only to plan scams but to practice them, improve them and perfect them. So how does this relate to the final table of the 2008 WSOP that played out last month on ESPN and other cable networks across the world? Well, there were exactly 114 days separating the last day of play that determined the final table and the start of play of the final table itself. That, my poker-playing friends, is lots of time.

Before I get into possible and probable cheating scenarios at the WSOP, let me get one thing straight. All those pre-final table statements made by Harrah's officials that they would watchdog every integral element

of the WSOP to ensure the integrity of the tournament, and that no cheating would be tolerated, are basically worthless—unless, of course, Harrah's employed the FBI and Scotland Yard to conduct 24-hour surveillance not only on the nine participants at the final table but all their friends and families as well, not to mention anyone else who might be connected to the players or the tournament, and this for a duration of 114 days.

In other words there's no way Harrah's or WSOP officials would ever be able to ensure a cheat-free final table, and they really don't care. Why? Well, if they did, they never would've permitted a 114-day break in the first place. It's clearly obvious that Harrah's and the WSOP organisers changed the Main Event format to milk out as much publicity and exposure as they could, which results in more money

for sponsors, TV and cable networks, and, of course, Harrah's and the WSOP itself.

The entire scenario is reminiscent of another one that never took place. Back in 2006, the American cable network Fox Sports Net attempted to run with the giant ball that was supposed to be a series of six-player winner-take-all freeze-out tournaments for \$60 million in 2006, then for \$75 million in 2007 and \$100 million in 2008. At the time, this was the greatest poker hype ever attempted. But finally Fox Sports Net realised that it couldn't convince the public that six players were each going to put up \$10 million of their own money to play against players of equal calibre to themselves. I even predicted in my book *Dirty Poker* that the giant freeze-out would never take place because it was basically a fraud, and sure enough it was cancelled.