



Joint media release

Australasia's best croupier ready to deal with world's finest players at major poker tournaments

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As The Star Gold Coast prepares to host two of the world's most coveted poker tournaments this month, one of its own has already won the right to deal with the best poker players on the planet.

The Star Gold Coast's Lewis Hopkins, 24, was crowned the '2019 Australasian Croupier Champion' in November after a three-day competition in Perth where he competed against the finest croupiers from 13 casinos across Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu, and Singapore including Marina Bay Sands.

The talented dealer said he was excited to work at the upcoming 'Australian Poker Open' and 'Super High Roller Bowl Australia' events, starting 25 January and continuing for 11 days.

After being held in destinations including China and the UK, the high-stakes events are coming to Australia for the first time in partnership with World Poker Tour® (WPT®) and Poker Central.

"It's a great feeling to have the chance to be part of these incredible international tournaments and be dealing for some of the world's most professional and elite poker players," Mr Hopkins said.

"As a croupier, our job is to provide the best entertainment experience no matter who is playing, but you can't help but get excited when you know the high calibre of these events and the players coming to town.

"Being world's best, the players are going to expect more in our guest service, our chip work, our speed, game knowledge and control, and our overall efforts to make sure that they are having a great time with us.

"Last year's WPT tournament was a great opportunity to mix with world-class players like Aussie poker players Joe Hachem and Alex Lynskey, as well as poker fans and sporting greats like Shane Warne.

"It was a huge buzz each day we came into work and it has provided a solid training ground for these next two major poker tournaments where we will see a higher level of skill and mastery – the stakes are going to be high and I can't wait to see how it all unfolds!"

The 'Australian Poker Open' will run for eight days from Saturday 25 January, while 'Super High Roller Bowl Australia' – with buy-ins of \$250,000 – will be contested over three days from Sunday 2 February.

The Super High Roller Bowl Australia will see poker professionals playing for a purse of around \$5 million, making it one of the richest three-day tournaments in the world.

Mr Hopkins won the 2019 Australasian Croupier Championship after competing against the top 20 croupiers across the region.

He was challenged and judged in technical ability, game craft, and guest service in the classic games of American Roulette, Blackjack, and Baccarat.

“I’ve been working in the gaming industry since 2016, where I started at a casino in New Zealand before moving to the Gold Coast more than two years ago to take up a croupier role at The Star Gold Coast,” Mr Hopkins said.

“I love what I do – and one day I hope to move into a gaming operations management role.

“But it’s not just about the games we help facilitate, it’s about the interaction with different people from all walks of life and ensuring we provide exceptional guest service no matter who they are.

“I didn’t expect to win the Australasian Croupier Championship because the field of croupiers was so high – I was up against the best dealers from some of the largest casinos in the world including Marina Bay Sands.”

The Star Gold Coast COO Jessica Mellor said she was proud to see one of the property’s many talented and skilful croupiers take out the Australasian title.

“Lewis is an exceptional croupier with excellent guest service skills and we’re so proud of him for bringing the Australasian title home to the Gold Coast,” Ms Mellor said.

“Lewis was selected to compete in the championship after undergoing rigorous judging internally against 11 other croupiers from across our property – with only two selected for the Australasian Croupier Championship.

“We have been sending croupiers to this competition since it was established in 2002 by TCS John Huxley, a leading manufacturer and supplier of gaming solutions and services.

“Lewis is our fourth croupier to have won this prestigious competition, with The Star Gold Coast previously winning the championship in 2012, 2013, and 2014.

“To win the overall title is an incredible achievement, and a real inspiration to the rest of our team, especially as we head into ‘Australian Poker Open’ and ‘Super High Roller Bowl Australia,’ where around 50 croupiers and floor managers will be involved in running these tournaments alone.

“Staging these events – which are attracting players from all around the world – requires preparation and teamwork and we are looking forward to making sure our people and our property continues to shine.

“The Star is the centre for thrilling entertainment on the Gold Coast, with our state-of-the-art poker venue delivering the best poker experience in Queensland and helping position us as the home of poker in the country.

“Introducing these tournaments to Australia for the first time only helps strengthens our reputation for staging major world-class events.”

Schedule of upcoming poker events:

- 25 January – Australian Poker Open Event #1: \$10K No Limit Hold’em
- 26 January – Australian Poker Open Event #2: \$10K Pot Limit Omaha
- 27 January – Australian Poker Open Event #3: \$10K No Limit Hold’em
- 28 January – Australian Poker Open Event #4: \$25K Pot Limit Omaha
- 29 January – Australian Poker Open Event #5: \$25K No Limit Hold’em

- 30 January – Australian Poker Open Event #6: \$50K No Limit Hold'em
- 31 January – Australian Poker Open Event #7: \$100K No Limit Hold'em
- 2 February – \$250K Super High Roller Bowl Australia

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About PokerCentral®

Poker Central is the ultimate destination for fans of poker tournaments, cash games, and lifestyle away from the tables. Poker Central delivers poker's most premier live events around the world via PokerGO, its direct-to-consumer OTT subscription service, as well as through network television distribution. PokerGO delivers over 100 days of live poker on an annual basis alongside a video-on-demand library that features original series and classic poker programming. Streaming and televised tournaments include its owned tournaments, such as Super High Roller Bowl, Poker Masters, and U.S. Poker Open, along with The World Series of Poker and WPT final tables, among others. For more information, visit www.pokercentral.com and www.pokergo.com.

About the World Poker Tour®

World Poker Tour (WPT) is the premier name in internationally televised gaming and entertainment with brand presence in land-based tournaments, television, online, and mobile. Leading innovation in the sport of poker since 2002, WPT ignited the global poker boom with the creation of a unique television show based on a series of high-stakes poker tournaments. WPT has broadcast globally in more than 150 countries and territories, and is currently producing its 18th season, which airs on FOX Sports Regional Networks in the United States. Season XVIII of WPT is sponsored by ClubWPT.com. ClubWPT.com is a unique online membership site that offers inside access to the WPT, as well as a sweepstakes-based poker club available in 35 states across the United States. WPT also participates in strategic brand license, partnership, and sponsorship opportunities. WPT Enterprises Inc. is a subsidiary of Allied Esports Entertainment, Inc. (NASDAQ: AESE). For more information, go to WPT.com.

About The Star Gold Coast

Since its inception in 1985, The Star Gold Coast has become the coastal city's most iconic tourism and entertainment destination and today welcomes around 3.5 million visitors a year through its doors. Owned and operated by The Star Entertainment Group, the property has continued to evolve significantly since embarking on an extraordinary transformation, and has become home to some of the nation's biggest events including the first World Poker Tour in Australia. Along with its consortium partners, the company is currently building a \$400 million, 53-storey first mixed-use tower at The Star Gold Coast, which will bring the internationally-acclaimed Dorsett hotel brand to Australia for the first time when it opens around 2022. Further, the partners have approval for an additional \$2 billion-plus masterplan for The Star Gold Coast, which includes an additional four towers and resort amenities.

For more information:

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