

“I don’t have a plan, I am just going to play well. I will take it one moment at a time, and we will see what happens....”

Said Victor to his friends over breakfast. He was looking to be in the poker zone, that Zen like state of being able to play his best game of poker ever, because today he would be playing the game of a lifetime. Today he would be playing against world champion poker players in the Ultimate Poker Adventure, Howard Lederer’s Poker Fantasy Camp. Playing against the All-Stars of Poker wasn’t scary any more. The day before he had eliminated numerous professional poker players in a celebrity pro-am tournament worth \$50,000.00 that began with almost 200 players, and had not only finished in the top 18, but had emerged the chip leader.

I met Victor on my first day of this Ultimate Poker Adventure, and he told me that he had never won a poker tournament before. We became fast friends. He wanted to improve the home game he occasionally plays with his friends. Vincent discussed the event with numerous friends but ultimately; he came on the adventure alone. We both shared that we hoping of bringing back stories of meeting poker legends to our local games. In the hour of sign up before the event stated we discussed what he hoped to get out of the trip, and he told me he wanted to learn a few things, and have a good time.

Based on his first day finish; as chip leader, above Phil Gordon, and Chris Ferguson, it is safe to say that he had indeed learned a few things. But it is fair to say that this was not the beginning of his poker education. He had been watching Howard Lederer’s “Secrets of Texas Holdem,” and “More Secrets of Texas Holdem” DVD course before showing up, but had not yet had the opportunity to try those skills. I am guessing that the poker pro’s that he personally eliminated from the table on the first day might have wished that he hadn’t watched those DVD’s. Over meals and between other events he would run a play by play of how he was using his newfound skills. He recounted eliminating guest celebrities like “Andy Bloch” and of course, he put the moves on “Howard Lederer” himself.

Victor, who had never managed to win a poker tournament before had just locked a position in

this \$50,000.00 tournament to guarantee he was in the money, against a field of players that were tough competition, both amateur and professional. We rapidly met a number of people that he hopes to call friends for years to come, including numerous World Champion Poker Players. The Poker Professionals that he met were a “Who’s Who of Tournament Poker”, Howard Lederer, his sister Annie Duke, Phil Gordon (host of Celebrity Poker), Chris “Jesus” Ferguson, Eric Seidel, Gus Hansen, Andy Bloch and more.

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| Airfare | \$ 753.00 |
| Poker Fantasy Camp | \$3195.00 |
| Personal Poker Lessons with Howard Lederer | PRICELESS |

The best part of the entire experience was the attendees and the professionals were accessible. Players and professionals freely exchanged information. The professionals offered advice, real advice between hands at the poker table, even DURING TOURNAMENTS. Players were having their games improve dramatically by the hand. The professionals discussed hand, strategies, position, risk and strangely enough the move that would increased the opportunity for the players to win.

Victor took every advantage to learn, and did he learn well. He had learned in 2 short days to become a poker player. A serious poker player, maybe even a world class poker player. The classes were wonderful, clear, insightful, and nurturing. They did not start where every off the shelf poker book starts, they started with practical knowledge that comes from years of real world experience. They also included a reading list for when we got home. They said, “read these books for more... but today we will teach you what is those books will not teach you”.

Our Starting lessons were with Phil Gordon. Phil is the Host of the televised Celebrity Poker Showdown. Phil has won nearly \$1,100,000 in poker tournaments since taking the poker world by storm in the 2001 World Series of Poker championship event where he finished 4th and won \$400,000. In less than an hour, Phil taught us a number of things. Firstly, Phil introduced us to the “Celebrity Poker Showdown Method” of counting your outs. This was how to quickly count your outs and calculate hand percentages in your head. Then it was onto “selective aggression” to determine where you will make your stand. Phil then explained the rules of

leading out into a pot. True to form he informed all participants that if he was sitting with us at a table and we limped into a pot, we should expect to get a slap on the wrist. Phil taught us to be consistent players, who do not reveal any unnecessary information and that once we got into the action, selective aggression was the only way to play.

Our next lesson was called “WWJD” or “what would Jesus Do?” Hosted by none other than Chris “Jesus” Ferguson. Chris is a marvelous and entertaining speaker who according to him brought 15 minutes worth of content, and spent an hour helping us understand it. Using the insight that he brought to the seminar, it was readily apparent that he is a master of maximizing opportunity while minimizing risk in a poker hand. He taught us how to save money in “Iffy” situations while maximizing money in “Sure Win” situations. Chris explained the subtleties of different types of betting, calling, and check raising. He explained in utter detail the concepts of buying a free card later in a hand, the value of a semi-bluff, and how it differs from an all out bluff. He finished with keeping your opponents scared, confused and off balance by changing gears in the middle of a game, and even in the middle of a hand.

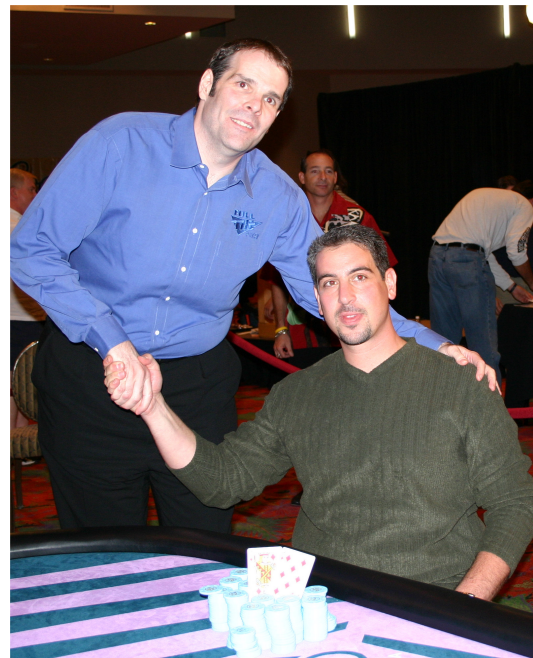
Howard Lederer brought the next great set of lessons, which taught players how to deal with the overall complex game, and what it takes to play really well. Howard shared that the secret to the game is focus, and walked us through how to develop and maintain a powerful poker mindset that leveraged this new focus and attention to detail.

Did it Work? Will I be a professional Poker Player? I can't yet tell, but I do know that I will forever enjoy the game more. And my first few games back at home were so different, more profitable, and fun, that I would say it was one of the best experiences of my life.

My new friend Victor is also wondering about his day job. Since our story about his making it into the money, that was just the beginning for him. He not only made it into the money, but he also made it his first final table.

The story only gets more amazing from there....

This was just the beginning of his learning. He managed to watch and learn from the pro's at the final table, and ask questions between the hands. Victor managed to outlive his competition, and after a few beats he managed play both well and tight, as an educated poker. He used these new tools, his new skills, and brought home his first tournament victory. And a victory it was. In his first final table tournament experience victory he won him a startling **\$14,000**. I guess it is fair to say that he accomplished his goals of “learning a few things, and have a good time.”



Victor Guthrie shaking hands w/Howard Lederer over his winning hand and all of the chips

Congratulations Victor and best of luck to all my new friends. If this inspires you, then I will see you at the next one in March 2005. For details on the 2005 adventure check out <http://www.extremeholdem.com/>

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