

Poker Tourney: Anderson Falls in Rankings

Anderson Trip to Vegas Brings Record Numbers; Not Winnings

BY O'KEEYA SINGLETON

The weekend of January 11th and 12th was the MBA World Series of Poker (WSOP) hosted by Harrah's Entertainment and Jungle Media at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. Last year, Anderson's top rounders (i.e. gamblers) brought home individual and team gold at the MBA poker championship held at Binion's in downtown Las Vegas. This year, Anderson came strong with approximately 100 players, spectators, and fans, second only to that one school from Cambridge, Mass.

Players competed in two 1-day tournaments for a total prize pool of over \$200,000 in cash and prizes, including a \$10,000 entry into the main event of the 2006 World Series of Poker. However, only two Andersonites placed in the money between the two tournaments this weekend. David Sauvage ('07) came in 11th, while John Tabis ('06) came in 40th place.

The school's rankings are based on the total prize winnings by each individual school divided by the total number of players from that school. Though the official rankings have not been released, without a first place finish and a fairly large number of players, it is a forgone conclusion that Anderson will fall from its first-place ranking. This year's tournament, like most WSOP related tournaments this year, had a record number of players (capped at 500 + 50 alternates).

Beyond poker, the events of the weekend included recruiting presentations by Harrah's Entertainment and Susquehanna International. Two-time World Poker Tour champion Phil Gordon (also seen on an episode of Blind Date) gave a lecture on the finer points of poker and pimped his new book and DVD. Dewar's and Red Bull kept everyone wide awake, yet strangely relaxed. After risking our lives mixing uppers and downers, it was time to get

down to serious business as the fine representatives of UCLA Anderson hit the Vegas Strip and Vegas' hottest night clubs.

Anderson may not have come in first in poker, but we came in first in partying. Tao, at the Venetian, and Risqué, at Paris, were popular spots on Friday night. The real action went down Saturday night at the hottest club in town, Pure. MBAs had the run of the place and free drinks (at least until 10 PM). Pure is also the home of the Vegas Pussy Cat Dolls, one of the hottest—take that how you want to—shows in Vegas.

The Girls of Anderson (calendar forthcoming) were not messing around this weekend. They brought their "A" games, leaving the other MBA damsels and Vegas party girls into distress, all this in stark contrast to what we all had to witness during finals week.

From the clubbers, to the poker players, to the job seekers, Harrah's cut

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Carissa Tells Her Story

A Profile of One Anderson Student

BY DAVID SAUVAGE

The biggest mistake my mom made was when she decided she couldn't handle me anymore," Carissa Phelps ('07) says of her twelve year old self. "I was probably a little out of hand, but there was good reason for it."

Carissa's mother made her daughter pack a bag. She drove her seventy miles from Coalinga to Fresno. There she deposited Carissa at the juvenile detention center, abandoning her to the state.

The state didn't want her either. "They couldn't do anything with me, because I hadn't broken the law. So I slept in the lobby for three days waiting for a

group home. They told me I was on a waiting list."

The lesson Carissa learned was never to depend on adults. She figured it was better to go it alone. When a home opened up, she didn't stay long. After everyone went to sleep, she snuck out a fire escape and disappeared into the night.

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Carissa has never told her story in public before. "This is part of me finding my path," she said at the beginning of our

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Carissa Phelps

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interview. “It’s going to be emotional. But I feel like I’m bringing something big to the table.”

At twenty-nine years old, Carissa is a first-year at the Anderson School. She’s known as a major personality of Section B, bursting into class like a whirlwind and startling professors with pointed, political questions.

Carissa is also one of a handful of students earning her law degree simultaneously. Although she’s keeping her options open, she’s looking toward a career in venture capital. She attributes her drive to a very difficult past.

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With nowhere to go, Carissa asked anyone she knew for shelter. “I would knock on people’s windows,” she remembers. “Friends of friends. These were people whose parents were alcoholics or single moms. You could usually crash at their place.”

A part of her enjoyed the adventure. “I wanted to feel alive. I felt it when I was on the street.” Another part of her was still a child. “I started calling runaway hotlines, trying to get them to tell me where to go, trying to get police to pick me up.”

Sometimes the police came. They contacted Carissa’s mother, who refused to take custody of her daughter. In a cycle that repeated itself many times, they would send Carissa to a home and she would run away.

Carissa recounts her lowest point. “I’m walking alone. I don’t know where I’m gonna go. And I come across this prostitute. She called her ‘boyfriend,’ who turned out to be her pimp.”

Two weeks later, the police pulled the pimp over. When they peered into his car, they saw a twelve year old girl in the back

seat. They arrested the pimp and sent Carissa to another home.

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Carissa has one happy memory from this period; she and her friends went joy-riding in a stolen car. “As soon as we did, we were surrounded by cops. Everybody jumped out. I bolted out the window. It was the coolest fuckin’ chase.”

It was also the turning point. Carissa was supposed to be sent to the Youth Authority, where delinquents learn to be life-long criminals. Instead she was one of four girls selected for a rehabilitation program at the Wakefield School for Boys.

Carissa received special attention from the counselors at the facility. They saw her potential when she started excelling in algebra. “Teaching myself math in juvenile hall was it,” she says. “It was the confidence builder. It was what made people believe in me.”

When Carissa was released from juvenile hall, she attended a school for drop-outs. Living with a friend, she took classes at night to catch up. After high school, she went to community college. From there she transferred to Fresno State.

She graduated summa cum laude with a degree in mathematics.

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Carissa has been trying to figure out how to help kids overcome similarly



troubled backgrounds. “Education got me out of it,” she says. “I see it as the key social ingredient, what’s going to change people.”

She worked as a teacher at a public high school, but she was frustrated by a lack of resources. “I knew I needed professional skills,” Carissa says of her application to graduate school. “I wanted to get tools that would prompt me to make a difference in people’s lives.”

As an MBA candidate, Carissa has her own approach to the problem. She believes the way to attract investors to education is to make it profitable. In the long run, she hopes to raise the funds to restructure the system on a national scale.

It’s hard to believe anything could stand in her way.