

# Kara Scott.

Poker's New It Girl

TIME TO MOVE OVER TIFFANY MICHELLE BECAUSE **KARA SCOTT** HAS SNATCHED THE TITLE OF QUEEN OF POKER AS WE HIT THE 2009 WSOP.

**A**lberta, Canada and its Caribou herds, beautiful forests and majestic rivers may be a far cry from a bustling city life, but growing up in the northern part of the state in a small town of only a few hundred people was near perfect for Kara Scott and her family.

“It was a pretty remote area and quite a simple upbringing. We spent a lot of time outside and our parents encouraged us to be creative. It was a great way to grow up”, reflected Scott. Growing up in a house built by her father, Scott would eventually take the leap that so many find hard, moving to the big smoke of Calgary when she was

Tim Duckworth

Supply Teacher in England and jumped at the opportunity seeing it as a great chance to do some travelling and see the world. Her Muay Thai training started to suffer after the move, but Scott was able to fill the void working as a presenter/producer for a Martial Arts TV show called Night of Combat. “I figured that since I was used to talking in front of thirty rowdy teenagers, being a TV presenter couldn’t be that much harder.”

“Hosting was pretty nerve-racking at first but I got a good grounding in working on live TV when I landed a job on a show called Poker Night Live” explains Scott of the cult cable show which focussed on online poker. However Scott copped some criticism from

started on the EPT, but luckily the camera crew I work with are bloody brilliant and were very patient as I learned a whole new style of presenting . . . two seasons on and I feel really good about my work.”

Using her down time while hosting, Scott was able to use her access to some fantastic players to discuss strategy and improve her game, and consequently was rewarded by winning the PartyPoker Sports Stars Challenge for €26,000. As the 2008 WSOP rolled around, PokerStars sponsored Scott into only her second big buy-in event and first WSOP event - the \$10,000 Main Event - and it was no surprise that Scott would be feeling the pressure and some nervous energy, “I’d played a fair amount of the TV six-seat shootout style tournaments and had done really well on them, but this was obviously very different.”

Just another player amongst the 6,844 starters, it took some time for Scott to settle down on day one, eventually bagging 111,000 at the close of play before slipping on day two, “The buzz of being there was amazing, and as geeky as it might sound, I felt like a proper poker player.” However day three would be the day that all players would be looking to survive – or more importantly surpass the dreaded number of 666 when the money bubble would burst. “When the bubble finally did burst I was exhilarated! I couldn’t believe that I’d cashed in the WSOP Main Event . . . that was actually more exciting than winning any money at that point.”

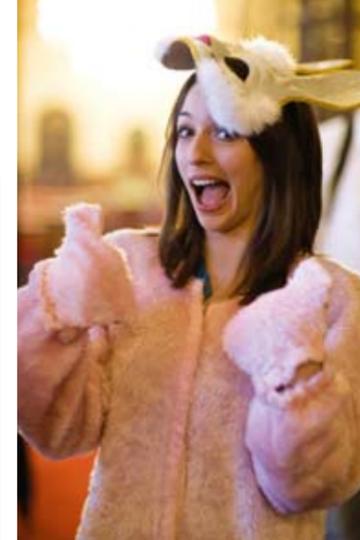
With Scott’s stack now climbing, she was moved to the bright lights and many cameras of the feature table at the end of day four, “I was far more nervous than I thought I would be” claims Scott. “My hands were shaking so much that I had a hard time stacking my chips. I wanted to play well, but I felt pretty

overwhelmed and was glad when play stopped for the night.”

As 189 players returned to day five action, Scott would again find herself on the feature table before falling in a very respectable 104th place for US\$41,816 when her **K♥Q♣** was unable to improve against Phi Nguyen’s **A♦10♦**. “By the time I busted out near dinner time I’d pretty much reached my limit. I’d never played that many days and that many hours in a row before, and was certainly not used to playing at such a high level” comments Scott before continuing with, “when I busted, I was elated. Not to be out of course – that sucks, but to have gone that far!”

New found confidence and respect as a poker player saw Scott return to hosting the fifth season of the European Poker Tour, registering a 52nd placing in the Budapest leg, “I don’t get a chance to play very many but PokerStars have been great. I’ve played five big buy-in events now – three EPT’s, the WSOP Main Event and the Irish open, all as a sponsored player for PokerStars.”

As Easter arrived, so did over 700 runners for the €3,200 Irish Open, and Scott would continue her hot form arriving at the final table stuck in the middle of the pack. One by one they fell as Scott claimed the chip lead, eventually taking a slight edge into heads-up play with Swede Christer Johansson. “It was quite surreal to realise that I’d be up there playing rather than interviewing people. It was exhilarating!” However it would be Johansson who would claim the title as Scott walked away with €312,600 for her second placing. When asked about her eventual finish Scott comments, “Part of me really did feel that I would win it, but to lose out to a player like Christer was no shame. He’s a great player and certainly my better, and hey, it gives me something to shoot for.”



With Scott now being a valued member of the poker community it wouldn’t be wrong to think that she is under added pressure to continue performing at the level she has over the past year. “It’s a good feeling to know that I’m no longer considered some kind of TV bimbo, but it does

– that’s a definite advantage.”

With the 2009 WSOP locked in, with two or three events including the Main Event as targets, a combination of deep stacked events at the Venetian and Caesar’s Palace will keep her poker urges in tune. “I love Vegas during the WSOP as everyone is there and it’s one hell of an atmosphere”, said Scott, who will break her trip up with a visit to Canada to see her family.

“My family are really proud of me and follow what I’m doing. I think they find it quite funny that I’m a poker player, but my family isn’t that conventional anyway, so having a quirky career kind of fits!” With her family and friends behind her and many mentors guiding her transition as a poker player, Scott

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a teenager to attend University.

Always a fan of martial arts movies, a love for Muay Thai would eventuate as she passed by a Thai boxing gym on her way to class. “I was pretty uncoordinated and a clumsy person, but joined and managed not to kill myself. I loved being able to extend myself and push myself physically.” Scott managed to compete in a few fights, learning some valuable life lessons on the way. “Getting into the ring with people who wanted to beat the crap out of me was intimidating at first, but realising that getting hit was part of the process, part of learning and getting better – that was an important lesson for me,” finishes Scott.

Completing her Teaching Degree, Scott was recruited as a

viewers over her lack of poker knowledge, but through the help and guidance of poker professional Nick Wealthall, she was able to turn things round through her mentor, turned close friend.

Despite the rough start, the Poker Night Live community started to show their support as Scott continued to learn and prove her commitment to the game. Still relatively unknown, Scott would be presented with an opportunity near impossible to turn down when she heard about the available European Poker Tour hostess roll while recording interviews at the 2007 WSOP.

Scott took the reins for season four and hasn’t looked back, after recently wrapping up the finale of season five. “I was nervous when I

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put more pressure on me to come up with results. Poker is about making money and as long as I can do that I’ll be happy.”

The debate about women in poker is a hot topic at any point and Scott freely adds her two cents, “there are definitely still people out there who don’t give women that much credit in poker, but generally I think good players don’t look at my gender at the table. Being a woman in poker is a good thing though. There still aren’t that many of us, so we’re more visible and therefore pretty valuable to sponsors

has gone from a relative no-name to one of the hottest talents on the circuit in less than twelve months.

Following Tiffany Michelle’s frowned-upon antics during last year’s Main Event that upset many, Scott can now definitely be seen as the upcoming Queen of Poker – whether it be because of her stunning looks, improving poker skills or down-to-earth personality.

Whatever way you look at Kara Scott, make sure to be on the lookout as she rolls into the Rio for the 2009 WSOP full of confidence and an eye on your chips!