



JORRYT VAN HOOFF PASSES MARCEL LUSKE FOR TOP SPOT ON NETHERLANDS ALL-TIME MONEY LIST

Dutch WSOP Main Event Final Tablist Explains His Poker Hiatus And Recent High Roller Run

By Tim Duckworth



For the past 15 years, Jorryt van Hoof has been collecting cashes in tournaments around the world, but his bread and butter has always been in the pot-limit Omaha cash games, both live, and online where he is most known as *TheCleaner11*. Outside of a seventh-place finish in the 2006 *Master Classics of Poker* €5,000 Dutch Poker Open, van

Hoof only had nine five-digit scores leading into the 2014 *World Series of Poker*, where he would ultimately reach the main event final table.

Van Hoof became the second Dutch player to reach the WSOP main event final table in as many years, joining Michiel Brummelhuis who finished seventh in 2013. There was a nearly

four-month delay before the November Nine returned to the Rio in Las Vegas to continue play, and Van Hoof's run eventually ended in third place for \$3,806,402 in prize money.

Following cashes around Europe and then back at the 2015 summer series, van Hoof decided to take a two-year hiatus before returning to

the high roller circuit a couple years ago. Two final tables at the *Master Classics of Poker* and *European Poker Tour* Barcelona in late 2018 would be followed by an incredible six-month stretch after the 2019 *WSOP*. From August to the present, van Hoof has amassed \$1,244,851 in winnings, which includes ten cashes in six countries, and wins in the *Master Classics of Poker* High Roller for €164,508 and the *Aussie Millions* pot-limit Omaha High Roller for AU\$467,280. As a result, he has now passed Marcel Luske for the top spot on the Netherlands' all-time money list.

With van Hoof's decision to transition from cash games to tournaments paying off, he now finds himself battling some of the game's best players as he travels the world with his fiancée Sophie. From his dedication, striving to optimize his decision process, and reigniting his love of poker, van Hoof doesn't see any changes in his approach to the game that has seen him earn more than \$5.6 million in tournament cashes.

Card Player recently caught up with van Hoof to talk about how he started playing poker, his rise up the stakes, reaching the *WSOP* November Nine, his move into the high roller scene, and more.

Card Player: How did you get your start in poker?

Jorryt van Hoof: I used to own a gaming store where I sold and traded *Magic: The Gathering* cards. In the store we had a room for people to play, and then some customers started playing poker and I joined in. I got lucky at the start, so I got a taste of it. And then I basically decided to try my luck at a Holland casino in a €50 fixed limit tournament, and I ran good in those as well. I was around 19 or 20, so then I started taking poker a little more serious.

CP: What were your next steps in developing your poker skills?

JvH: My friends and I began going to more casinos. I lived in a student house, and the other guys living in there also played poker very actively and we started playing online on *Paradise Poker* and sites like that. Those were fun memories. We were having a lot of fun and we were putting in a lot of time playing.

Those early stages were pretty important for a poker player. If you run good in the early stages, it bolsters your

motivation to invest more time in it. I final tabled a tournament in France, and it was early in the morning, and I played some hands where I gained some confidence. In that first year I won and lost my bankroll three times. My main income came from the gaming store so it was all fine, but the third time I lost \$23,000, which was a lot of money for me. So then I made my first New Year's resolution ever, to take poker really seriously.

CP: With a resolution to take poker more seriously, what were the key changes you made?

JvH: In January I started playing sit-n-go's and took bankroll management seriously. My housemates and I started playing sit-n-go's on *PartyPoker* where they had leaderboards that awarded bonuses. We managed to win some of the bonuses by basically grinding all day long.

I decided to quit university and stepped away from the gaming store business to focus on playing poker. That's after one year of playing as an amateur. I decided to just go for poker and I focused on sit-n-go's, then switched to cash games for a bunch of years. I would play tournaments on the side every now and then before I got really lucky and final tabled the *WSOP main event* in 2014.

CP: You finished in third-place for \$3.8 million in 2014. How was the experience dealing with the money pressure, the lights and cameras, and just the general buzz around reaching the November Nine?

JvH: I just loved it. I loved the experience. There were some elements of it that could have made me nervous, but I just reflected on myself and thought about which elements would get me nervous, and how can I resolve those issues. I think I was one of the calmest guys there. Everybody was pretty nervous in that situation, and I think I felt that there was a positive energy. You need to make sure you sleep good and stuff like that, but I'm pretty happy with how I prepared and I loved the experience. Not just the poker and the result, but you get to take all your friends and family there. I don't always like to be the center of attention, but this is why you work really hard. It's really nice, and especially when things work out well and you're happy with your play. It's just like one good memory.

CP: It was nearly a four-month break

between reaching the final table and playing it out. Did you set any preparation goals? Did you approach it a certain way?

JvH: I did a lot of preparation. I looked into Independent Chip Model (ICM) quite a bit. I only played tournaments now and then, so I studied with some of my friends to understand the impact of different stack sizes. To understand a little better what the value is of increasing your stack size in certain moments, or decreasing it, risking everything, or risking half of it. What does that mean not just based on chip EV (expected value), but the value of your stack and what happens to it.

I also got coaching on the mental aspect to be prepared there as well. I was meditating, and at that point I had been doing it for a year or two. I think it really helped me identify which aspects might make me nervous, and how to work through these events. I think that it's really important to me, otherwise you get caught up in your own thoughts and that might distract you from playing.

CP: It was only six years ago, but knowing what you do now, regardless of the result, would you do anything different?

JvH: I made some conscious decisions to play some high-level buy-in tournaments to prepare because I had never played anything higher than a \$10,000 buy-in. I played a \$50,000, and a couple of \$25,000, so that helped me. I did everything I could to become more fit, the only thing I think I could have done was get a really good technical player to coach me. I didn't do that, so maybe that was an option.

CP: When it comes to studying poker now, people are looking at solvers and running simulations. What were you doing to study when you weren't playing? What was your approach to the game once you started taking it seriously?

JvH: If I could go back in time and give younger Jorryt some advice, I would tell him you need to study a little bit more. The games were so easy back then that if you applied just logic to your decisions, it will get you pretty far. I remember that when we started playing poker, we were just looking at situations where everyone seemed to be folding all the time, so we should be betting a lot. It's the first concept that my housemates and I thought of, so it made you a more aggressive player

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which was in these games already pretty good.

Then when I progressed, I just talked through hands and what seemed good, and what didn't seem good. Looking at all the players that were winning a lot and what they were doing at showdowns. Started to think about ranges, and not just your hand. Knowing what you have in your range, and in each spot, we just picked up on that reasonably fast. Talking with other players and knowing which players were good and had something useful to tell so we could learn from.

CP: Following a few results in 2015 and 2016, you have a two-year gap in live results until late 2018. Was there a reason behind the extended break?

JvH: I wouldn't call it retirement; I just decided to not play as much poker and just began to explore other aspects in life. I played poker from year one, so it was the right thing for me to do at that point. I decided to explore other interests, invest a little more in my free time, and learn about other stuff. I would call it a hiatus because after the break I started play poker again, and I really, really love poker. Something I learned from not playing for a few years is that I really love it so much, so that is what made me start playing again.

Reignited, but also really appreciative of how good the game is, how good the life is, and how much I love it. I didn't have much to compare it to and really had tunnel vision for poker. So now I don't have the tunnel vision as much, and I'm living more balanced. Spending more energy towards my relationship, and having a broader interest in other things. But I love poker.

CP: In the last six months you've collected ten cashes in six countries, won two tournaments, and made eight final tables and won over \$1.24 million. Is it safe to say your poker schedule has been kicked up a gear? Is there a reason behind this?

JvH: I just decided that I was going

to switch to tournaments around six months ago. I was in Barcelona and couldn't get into a cash game. There were a lot of politics going on and I really hate that. The tournaments looked solid and are going on all around the world, so I figured I would switch to tournaments and my goal became to just win these tournaments. Before that I was playing pot-limit Omaha cash games for years. Since I final tabled the main event, I barely played tournaments. Maybe the *World Championship of Online Poker (WCOOP)* and stuff like that. So six months ago it was a conscious decision to transition to live tournaments. I'm traveling now with my fiancée and we're seeing the world. That's what I love now more than cash games.

CP: When you are competing in High Roller tournaments, how do you find battling this competition as opposed to what you might find online, or in smaller buy-in tournaments?

JvH: What I love about tournaments is the pressure involved. While in cash games it's more of a grind. You can't just quit when you're in a tournament, so there's a huge stamina aspect, and I really love the live dynamics as well. I think there is a lot of non-verbal information that people give off, and it's nice to try and not give that off yourself. It's this other dynamic when I play live poker that I really like, and it's just playing at a high level with really elite players. I find it very motivating as well. Every showdown is interesting and you learn something from it, the whole process for me is very interesting. I know that I can learn so much, which motivates me a lot as well.

CP: How do you approach playing with some of the best players in the world?

JvH: I try to be as present as possible all the time. Paying attention to whatever is happening, and my approach is to try and win the tournament. I think that is important, and it can influence

your decision making if you play to win or play to make the money. I just want to make the right money EV decision, but if you try to change something in your game, you may over or under adjust in spots. The approach is to try and learn and take away as much as possible from each tournament I play. Trying to win the trophy, to have fun, and to investigate my own experience. If I feel tilted over something, I want to investigate and learn about it, and then hopefully move the lesson I've learnt to other aspects of my life.

CP: In December 2019 you passed Marcel Luske and moved into the top spot on the Netherlands all-time money list. Has this always been a goal of yours or something that just happened?

JvH: It's more something that just happened. It's a nice something that happened of course. I mean, rankings are nice, I try to be as high as possible in them, but it's a secondary motivation. It's more about optimizing my own decision process. People told me I moved into first spot, and it was nice, but it's not a motivational tool for me.

CP: Now that you are no. 1, is this something that you would like to hold for as long as possible?

JvH: When I enter a tournament, I really feel it helps me to focus on having to win the tournament. If I don't think like that, then I might become sloppy or spewy. A tournament can last multiple days and you have to be in your chair until the end. If I tell myself that I need to win, then it implies that I can't bust early. That's something I tell myself mentally to keep motivated and keep myself in line. Outside of the tournament, I just don't want to make mistakes in general. Everybody makes mistakes and you learn from them, but it's more important to me to play really well.

CP: Congratulations on your recent engagement to Sophie. How important is it having stability in your personal



life being a professional poker player?

JvH: I think it's super, super important. It will vary from person to person, and it depends on your own needs. If one of your needs is to have a stable good relationship and you don't have one, it will influence you everywhere in life because you'll be motivated to fill that need. So as long as you don't have it, then it'll interfere with other things. Sophie is just very supportive as well, and I'm lucky that she likes being at poker places because not all partners like to. She's already looking forward to Las Vegas. So that's pretty good.

CP: When you're travelling together for poker tournaments, what is your balance of time between playing and spending time with your partner or friends?

JvH: When we're at the poker festival, poker comes first. But whenever I bust from a tournament, I'll have to check in if I went to the gym already, or did I meditate, and also have to reflect on the tournament a little bit and see if some study questions arise. Then outside of that I can take some time off, but primarily when we're at the poker festival, I try to just maximize on

poker. We both like going to the gym and like taking walks. We like eating out, and these are things I want to do anyway that are good for poker as well. I need to eat, and I like to move a little bit because I'm sitting at a chair all day. So, it's nice that she has the same interests, and even if I'm completely focusing on poker, we are still doing something together a lot during the festival.

CP: What does the future hold for your poker career? Do you have any specific goals in mind or benchmarks you're trying to hit? What's going to keep you motivated going forward?

JvH: As long as I feel I love the game as much as I do right now, I'll continue to play. Part of my motivation comes from the ability to continue to learn at poker. And I don't see an end to that. At some point other interests may take over and I'll play less, or if the games change, or become more difficult, for any other reason I may play less. I don't foresee that in the near future as I really love it. Goal wise is to just win at poker and maximizing my output as a professional poker player. That's the most fundamental goal. ♠

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