



**2017 CHAMPION  
GRIFFEN BENGEL**

Canadian star **Griffin Bengier** made the trip to Dublin, Ireland for the **2017 Irish Open** and it turned out to be a superb decision because he outlasted 1,129 opponents to become the tournament's champion, an accolade that came with a €200,000 first-place prize.

A record-breaking field of 1,129 players created a prize pool of €1,128,294 which was shared among the top 135 finishers. The money bubble burst on Day 2 when the 535 Day 1a and Day 1b players were reduced to a more manageable 113.

The unfortunate player to burst the bubble was **Paul Carr** whose pocket sixes fell foul to the ace-king of **Kristaps Zarans** when the latter paired his king on the flop. Carr received an entry to the 2018 Irish Open as a consolation prize while the surviving 135 players each locked up at least €1,500 in cash.

By the time the unofficial final table of nine was set, the minimum any of the finalists could win was €13,500 but with €200,000 awarded to the eventual champion, nine of the final nine wanted to claim that sum.

### 2017 IRISH OPEN FINAL TABLE CHIP COUNTS

SEAT	PLAYER	CHIPS
1.	Chris Dowling	1,945,000
2.	Michael Conaty	2,090,000
3.	Mihail Mazilu	1,855,000
4.	Griffin Bengier	8,010,000
5.	Antony Wickert	7,630,000
6.	Sameer Singh	1,100,000
7.	Michael Fletcher	1,100,000
8.	Vamshi Vandanapu	2,420,000
9.	Fintan Hand	6,895,000

It took more than four hours of nine-handed play before a player was eliminated on the final day. With blinds at 80,000/160,000/20,000a, **Michael Conaty** moved all in for 2,345,000 and **Michael Fletcher** called off his chips in the big blind. It was king-ten of clubs for Conaty and a pair of nines for Fletcher. Two tens on the flop left Fletcher drawing thin with a king on the turn leaving him drawing dead.

Despite winning Fletcher's stack, Conaty was the next player to head for the rail. Conaty opened to 400,000 from the cutoff with ace-ten and Bengier called in the small blind with the dominating ace-jack.

Bengier then check-raised Conaty's 425,000 continuation bet to 950,000 and called when Conaty moved all in on him on the jack-high flop. No help arrived for Conaty on the turn or river and his 2017 Irish Open came to an end.

Conaty was the 2016 Irish Open runner-up; he had reached back-to-back Irish Open final tables.

Seventh place went to **Fintan Hand** who sported a shamrock suit throughout the final day. Hand's final hand saw him call **Chris Dowling's** 2,300,000 shove from the big blind with ace-ten only to see Dowling reveal ace-jack of diamonds. Dowling improved to a full house by the turn to leave six players in the hunt for the €200,000 top prize.

Those six became five when **Sameer Singh** saw the dealer slide his stack to **Vamshi Vandanapu**. Singh's ace-six was no match for the ace-jack of his opponent, and when neither player improved on the community cards, Vandanapu's jack-kicker played and Singh bust.

Next to fall was **Antony Wickert** who moved all in with ace-six and was called by Benger holding ace-ten. Wickert didn't even get a sweat because Benger flopped a Broadway straight to send him to the cashier's cage.

Vandanapu was the next casualty of the final table. The blinds were now 120,000/240,000/30,000a and **Mihail Mazilu** made it 800,000 to see the flop. Vandanapu called, as did Dowling.






A flop reading king-five-five saw the action check to Mazilu and he bet 1,000,000. Dowling folded, Vandanapu jammed all in for the rest of his 4.3 million stack and Mazilu snap-called with a pair of black aces. Vandanapu needed a minor miracle as he held king-queen, but the poker gods were not charitable and Mazilu's hand held.

Shortly after returning from the dinner break, Dowling was eliminated in third place. Dowling raised to 660,000 at the 150,000/300,000/40,000a level, Benger three-bet to 1,700,000, Dowling shoved and Benger called.

Dowling turned over ace-eight and Benger held the ace-queen. An ace and a queen on the flop tightened Benger's grip on the hand with the three of diamonds turn card guaranteeing victory.

Benger trailed Mazilu by 13,050,000 to 20,795,000 chips going into the one-on-one battle but the stacks were soon reversed when Benger flopped a straight with his five-four of diamonds and managed to get Mazilu to call a huge overbet with a pair of eights.

With the chip lead in hand, Benger began to turn the screw and it didn't take long for him to claim Mazilu's stack for his own.

The final hand of the 2017 Irish Open saw Benger check-raise with  on an  flop and then call when Mazilu moved all in with . The  turn and  river kept Benger's hand best, which bust Mazilu in second place and left Benger to win what is the fourth major live poker title of his career.

## 2017 IRISH OPEN FINAL TABLE RESULTS

PLACE	PLAYER	PRIZE
1.	Griffin Benger	€200,000
2.	Mihail Mazilu	€125,000
3.	Chris Dowling	€75,000
4.	Vamshi Vandanapu	€50,000
5.	Antony Wickert	€35,000
6.	Sameer Singh	€25,000
7.	Fintan Hand	€19,445
8.	Michael Conaty	€15,750
9.	Michael Fletcher	€13,500