



**2022 CHAMPION
STEVE O'DWYER**

The Irish Poker Open main event returned to the live felt in 2022, after two years of being held online during the pandemic. There was apparently plenty of pent up demand for live action, as the €1,150 buy-in no-limit hold'em event attracted a record live field of 2,040 entries to the Citywest Hotel in Dublin to build a prize pool of €1,989,000. While thousands turned out, it was one of poker's most accomplished professional tournament players who emerged victorious with the title Steve O'Dwyer. The American-born resident of Dublin dominated the final table, busting each and every opponent on the last day as he stormed to victory.

O'Dwyer earned €318,700 (\$344,196 USD) as the champion, increasing his career earnings to more than \$31.9 million.

"I am really happy to win this, maybe more than any other poker tournament I have ever played," O'Dwyer told Irish Poker Open reporter Rod Stirzaker. "It was special, especially not being able to play live after such a long time."

This tournament featured four starting flights spread across Apr. 13-15. The field combined for Day 2 on Saturday, Apr. 16, and then set the final table on Sunday, Apr. 17. Plenty of notables made deep runs in this event, including bracelet winner Espen Sandvik (51st – \$5,692 USD), Paul Newey (48th – \$5,692 USD), William Kassouf (31st – \$7,538 USD), Dermot Blain (29th – 29th – \$7,538 USD), and Richard Ashby (20th – \$11,491 USD).

O'Dwyer entered the final day as the chip leader, with Kyle Maguire in second place. 2014 Irish Open champion Patrick Clarke was the first to hit the rail, with his A-J running into the pocket kings of O'Dwyer, which improved to top set on a king-high runout. Clarke earned \$28,760 USD as the ninth-place finisher.

O'Dwyer scored his next knockout when his A-K outran the pocket queens of Justin Boyle (8th – \$39,355 USD). O'Dwyer spiked a king on the turn to take the lead and held from there to narrow the field to seven.

Chris Williams' run in this event concluded when he lost a preflop flip with pocket eights facing the A-Q of a surging O'Dwyer. An ace on the flop again saw O'Dwyer take the lead in the race, a lead he never relinquished. Williams earned \$50,274 USD as the seventh-place finisher.

A few shorter stacks doubled through O'Dwyer, but he remained the clear leader as short-handed play continued. Matthew Bushell called off his stack with pocket jacks facing a hijack shove from O'Dwyer, who held A-2 suited. O'Dwyer flopped a deuce and a backdoor flush draw. A second diamond on the turn gave him a full blown flush draw, which he hit on the river to secure the pot and eliminate Bushell in sixth place (\$66,528 USD).

2016 Irish Open champion Daniel Wilson hit the rail in fifth place, calling off the last of his extremely short stack from the big blind with 6-2 suited. He was up against 9-8 offsuit for O'Dwyer, which improved to a queen-high straight on the river. Wilson took home \$88,074 as the fifth-place finisher, which ensured that a new champion would be crowned in this event.

Garry Spinks called off the last of his stack with A-K suited and was dominating the K-Q of O'Dwyer, but the flop brought two queens to leave him in dire straights. The turn and river were of no help to Spinks and he was knocked out in fourth place, earning \$111,888 for his strong showing in this event.

When the final three players took a break not long after that, O'Dwyer sat with nearly 11 times as many chips as second-ranked Mircea Rus. Kyle Maguire earned a double-up through Rus to leave him with just a handful of big blinds. O'Dwyer scored the final blow, with his pocket eights holding against the 8-7 suited of Rus. A safe runout gave O'Dwyer a massive lead heading into heads-up play, while Rus was awarded \$149,796 for his third-place finish.

It didn't take long for O'Dwyer to convert his massive chip advantage into the title. In the final hand, he limped in with **A♥ 5♣** and Maguire shoved from the big blind with **9♠ 9♣**. O'Dwyer called and the board ran out **A♠ J♥ 4♠ J♦ 10♦** to lock up the pot and the title for O'Dwyer. Maguire cashed for \$211,464 USD as the runner-up.