

# Absolute Poker's PotRipper Cheating Scandal

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## Did Absolute Poker Management Cheat Their High Rollers?

In less than two months, rumors about the Absolute Poker "Super User" account have gone from rumor, to a story widely believed by internet poker players, to a scandal that has been all but proven. The twisted tale of how a user named PotRipper could see other players cards was bad enough, but to hear allegations that this poker cheat was actually an employee of Absolute Poker has sent shock waves throughout the world of online poker.

The controversy that shook the core of the \$12 Billion online poker industry began last month with a high stakes poker tournament that was played at Absolute Poker. Marco Johnson, a 21-year old resident of Las Vegas finished second place in that tournament. Even though he was happy to claim the \$20,000 prize for second place, something about the game just seemed odd to Johnson.

Johnson requested a copy of his hand history for the tournament so that he could take another look at his play and the hands he dealt. What he received was something entirely different &ndash; an item that sparked the biggest controversy to ever hit the online poker industry. The hand history report that Johnson requested should have been a simple list of the hands he was dealt during the course of the poker tournament. What Absolute Poker sent, presumably by mistake, was an excel spreadsheet that showed the cards and IP addresses of every player in the tournament. That is where the story gets interesting.

With this new file in hand, new questions about the tournament were raised. Of particular interest was the activity of a player using the name PotRipper, who claimed a \$30,000 prize for finishing the tournament in first place. PotRipper's play in the Absolute Poker tournament was highly suspicious, enough the Johnson immediately felt as though he had been cheated. Before making such an accusation, however, Johnson reviewed the file with industry experts, who came to some startling conclusions.

Based upon his patterns of play, those investigating the file determined that PotRipper was privy to information about the cards of other players at the table. The group dubbed this person as being a Super User on the Absolute Poker site, claiming that everyone's cards were visible to the account. This was further evidenced by the fact that PotRipper folded his first two hands before an invisible entity named "#363" arrived at the tournament and followed PotRipper through the game, seemingly alerting him to what cards everyone had.

More disturbingly, the IP address for the PotRipper account was traced back to the Absolute Poker servers in Kahnawake, Mohawk Territory, Canada &ndash; meaning that it was most likely an inside job. This prompted further investigation that connected the IP address to Scott Tom, partial owner and former executive of Absolute Poker. The PotRipper account itself has been linked to AJ Ripper, the former Director of Operations for Absolute Poker.

Absolute Poker's initial response was to simply issue no response. When it became clear that the problem was not going to disappear on it's own, the company issued a statement that an internal audit had been performed. The company stated that the audit proved that there was no such Super User account at Absolute Poker, and no instances of cheating could be found other than two instances of chip dumping by members of Absolute Poker.

The online poker community was split at this point, with half believing Absolute Poker on the matter. Then those who had investigated the original log file for the poker tournament posted a tournament re-enactment on YouTube using the hand data that Absolute Poker had released. Watching the video made it clear that there was more than luck behind PotRipper's play.

This placed Absolute Poker in an odd position. The company has now admitted that cheating had taken place on their poker site. However, the company maintained that Tom and Ripper were not the ones who played the hand. Absolute Poker states that the cheating was done at the hands of a technical staff employee who wanted to demonstrate a security flaw to the company, and that the employee got carried away. The company refunded all money plus interest to those who had been defrauded in the PotRipper poker tournament.

The main issue facing the Absolute Poker cheating scandal at the moment is just how wide spread the cheating was, and if it has ceased. Absolute Poker has only made restitution for players in the one tournament with PotRipper. No one is certain how many other tournaments he may have played in, or how many other screen names were used. At present, the online poker community suspects that as many as 5 screen names may have been cheating players out of as much as \$1 Million.

Absolute Poker has not named the technical employee that the blame for the ordeal, nor has there been any mention of what action will be taken against him. The Gaming Commission of Kahnawake has stated that an investigation will be launched into the matter, and law enforcement officials in Quebec will also be looking into whether or not this is a case of criminal wrong doing.