



This week, the seventh season of the GSN cash game franchise “High Stakes Poker” will begin taping at the Bellagio on the Las Vegas Strip. Last year, the action emanated from the Golden Nugget in Downtown Las Vegas and a source close to GSN told Poker News Daily that the change in venue was due to a “production decision.”

No members of the media are allowed inside the “High Stakes Poker” suite for Season 7. Instead, what happens in the small makeshift poker room will remain a closely guarded secret until the seventh cycle of the show airs beginning in February on GSN. “High Stakes Poker” will return to its Sunday night time slot and feature with the same faces as last year: PartyPoker pro Kara Scott conducting interviews from tableside and former “Welcome Back, Kotter” star Gabe Kaplan flying solo in the booth.

The constantly-changing list of pros scheduled to turn out over the next three days includes Barry Greenstein, Doyle Brunson, recent World Poker Tour (WPT) Five Diamond World Poker Classic winner Antonio Esfandiari, David “Viffer” Peat, Phil Laak, Jason Mercier, Phil Galfond, and former World Series of Poker (WSOP) Main Event champ Scotty Nguyen, who will be making his “High Stakes Poker” debut. The same source also relayed that several amateurs will join the fray.

One player who won’t be gracing the “High Stakes Poker” felts this year is Daniel Negreanu, one of only a handful of players who have competed in every season to this point. Negreanu explained via Twitter why he wouldn’t be able to make it to Las Vegas in time: “Sad news: At airport headed home, which means the trip is over. Have a commercial shoot when I land, which means no HSP for me this year.” Negreanu had been in Sydney for the PokerStars Asia Pacific Poker Tour Grand Final, where he made the final table and finished ninth.

Lex Veldhuis will also be a no-show for “High Stakes Poker” at the Bellagio. Veldhuis Tweeted earlier today, “Crazy busy week. Leaving for Vegas on Monday. Have to get all my shit done. Had to cancel for High Stakes Poker.”

Also potentially absent from the “High Stakes Poker” felts this season will be Full Tilt pros, although our source could not confirm or deny their attendance. Greenstein, a PokerStars pro,

explained the dilemma on TwoPlusTwo: “Full Tilt has two major concerns. First is they don’t like their players playing when PokerStars is the sponsor of the show... Secondly, they were unhappy that PokerStars bought the HSP archives. In the early seasons of HSP, the players didn’t wear logos, so FTP is concerned that viewers will be able to go to PokerStars.tv and see the FTP players without logos and be confused by their affiliation.”

In previous years, the press was invited for interviews prior to the action. In fact, when the filming of Season 7 was scheduled to take place last month, we were invited to watch the action unfold. However, due to the change in location to the Bellagio this month, a source close to GSN told us, “We have all of these new players, a new venue, and new elements. It’s a small space. It’s super tight and we just want to focus on the game play.”

“High Stakes Poker” will once again boast a \$200,000 buy-in for Season 7 and, unlike NBC’s “Poker After Dark,” no change to Pot Limit Omaha is expected. Instead, the GSN series will continue spreading high-stakes No Limit Hold’em. One-hour episodes will once again grace the small screen next year, as has been the case in years’ past.