



» Did you know - Queen-Three is known as the 'computer hand'

MAN VERSUS MACHINE

IT HAS ALREADY happened in chess, a game considered by some to be the very epitome of cerebral challenges, and later this month, at Vancouver's Hyatt Regency Hotel, a poker-playing computer program developed by the University of Alberta will battle against a pair of poker kings in a \$50,000 man versus machine contest.

Polaris, the reigning world champion computer-poker program, will challenge two of the sharpest poker players in the world, pros Phil 'Unabomber' Laak and Ali Eslami in a two-day event, expected to consist of around 2,000 hands.

"This will be a world first and, I hope, the beginning of an annual

event," said Jonathan Schaeffer, team leader of the university's Polaris program. Schaeffer, who holds the Canada Research Chair in Artificial Intelligence, believes the event is a natural evolution of the 1994 match between IBM's 'Deep Blue' chess program and Gary Kasparov, who was at that time the world chess champion.

"The difference is that chess is a game of perfect knowledge, meaning there is nothing hidden from the players. In poker, you can't see your opponent's hand and you don't know what cards will be dealt. This makes poker much harder for artificial intelligence," says Schaeffer.

Most poker players would agree that it's difficult enough even without the benefit of AI. We await the outcome.



PLAY AGAINST THE CHAMPS

EVER WONDERED WHAT it's like to go heads-up against a WSOP champion? Poker giant PokerStars is giving everyone the chance to live their dream and play poker with one of its bracelet holders – via a fun new site called Play The Champs.

First, pick either Greg Raymer, Joe Hachem, or Chris Moneymaker, and then try to outplay them in a unique heads-up video match. You're each dealt hands, and given the option of folding, raising, going all-in.

You get to experience what it's really like to be stared out by one of Joe Hachem's famous eyeballings, or to come under the cosh from a Greg Raymer re-raise. Check it out yourself by visiting the site at www.playthechamps.com.

KNOW HOW TO RAISE 'EM?

Manual for applying poker skills to parenting

ANOTHER POKER BOOK? You may have thought that students of the game are knee-deep in volumes focusing on strategy, probability theory and game play, but now a publisher called Learning Interface has decided it's time to market another poker book – *Big Slick Daddy* by Mark Borowski.

So does Mr Borowski's literary efforts enlighten us further upon the best way in which we should play a starting hand comprising an Ace and small kicker? Or suggest that indiscriminate playing of off-suited high cards is a sure-fire way to lose money?

Er, no. The book's sub-heading is 'Poker Strategies for Parenting Success'. That's right – this father-of-two has written a book that applies poker strategies to parenting. Among other features, the book describes how to go "all in with your kids" and how to "play limit parenting" (we're not making this up).

And you'll never guess – among the pearls of wisdom is the advice that while bluffing can work wonders in poker, you should never try it with your children because empty threats never work. Wow! You can buy the book from amazon.com.



« Make the right call when a little one limps in...