



## Press release

### **WSOP champion wins first leg of Grosvenor UK Poker Tour**

*Takes home £75,500 first prize*

After three long hard days of poker in Bolton's Grosvenor Casino London based professional Praz Bansi was finally crowned champion. Bansi outlasted 196 other fellow poker players to take down the £75,500 first prize and become the inaugural winner of the Grosvenor UK Poker Tournament (GUKPT).

Praz, along with runner up Karl Mahrenholz, are part of a crew of upcoming London based poker players who call themselves the Hit Squad. Their next target will be the second leg of the GUKPT in Walsall (Feb 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>). Although Karl walked away with over £35,000, it was Praz who went away with the top prize, a limited edition Tutima watch and a seat at the Grand Final event (worth £3,000) in London at the end of the year.

The first leg of the event was originally planned to have a capacity of 160 players, however, due to massive demand this ended up being increased to 200. Amongst the players, there were several well-known UK pros, three of which were sporting WSOP winners' bracelets - John Gale, Lawrence Gosney and the eventual winner Praz Bansi. The field also consisted of highly rated Internet pros such as James Dempsey and James Atkin.

Of the 31 online qualifiers who came exclusively from BlueSq poker.com two made it into the prize money and one (Alan Henson) managed to turn his £60 satellite win into a £10,800 windfall by finishing in sixth place.

The Ten Leg Tour is being recorded by Sunset and Vine for Channel Four and will be shown later in the year.

Jonathan Raab Tour Manager commented:

*"The first leg of the tour has been an overwhelming success and Praz is a very worthy winner who has cemented his reputation as one of the finest emerging players on the UK Poker Circuit. We look forward to seeing him at our next event in February where he sure to put up another strong performance."*

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### **Tour dates & locations:**

January – Bolton, 12<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup>

February – Walsall, 15<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup>

March – Cardiff, 23<sup>rd</sup> -25<sup>th</sup>

April – Manchester, 20<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup>

May – Brighton, 18<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup>

July – Newcastle. 20<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup>

August – Luton, 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup>

September – Plymouth, 7<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup>

October – London, 18<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup>

November – Blackpool, 15<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup>

November/December - GRAND FINAL, London, 29<sup>th</sup> November-2<sup>nd</sup> December



### **About Blue Square:**

Blue Square was launched on 5th May 1999 and is one of the largest online gaming company in the UK. The product suite offered by Blue Square has grown from its traditional bookmaking business to now offer all aspects of the gaming market including casino, slots and poker with a goal to increase the product range in the near future. The fixed odds betting services covers many channels including the Internet, Interactive TV, WAP and telephone.

### **About Grosvenor Casinos:**

Grosvenor Casinos operates 33 casinos throughout the UK. It positions its gaming facilities as a mainstream leisure pursuit providing customers with an alternative night out. Grosvenor Casinos offers the latest in gaming facilities to regular, occasional and recreational gamers. It provides customers with a full leisure experience, offering bar and restaurant; sports lounge facilities and regular live entertainment.

Both Blue Square and Grosvenor are part of the Rank Group Gaming Division which also operates 113 Mecca Bingo clubs in the UK and 11 bingo clubs in Spain.