

Poker legend visits SA

Poker fans will get to see one of the sport's greatest names in action on their home turf when Emperors Palace hosts the World Poker Tour (WPT) from October 19 to 26.

The WPT Emperors Palace Poker Classic will be local fans' first chance to see Chris Moneymaker, one of the biggest names in international poker, in action.

Moneymaker is widely credited with single-handedly turning the game into the worldwide, mass-participation phenomenon it is today.

What makes Moneymaker special is what he achieved in the 2003 World Series of Poker.

At that stage, Moneymaker was working as an accountant in Tennessee.

He qualified for the main event through a \$39 online satellite tournament.

He won that tournament, qualifying him for another, and he won that as well.

Soon after that he competed in Las Vegas, at Binion's Horseshoe, at what was then the biggest physical poker tournament in history.

A total of 839 players took part, fighting it out for a share of the \$10-million prize money.

In a dramatic showdown against poker pro Sam Farha, Moneymaker emerged as World Poker Champion, taking the \$2.5-m pot and becoming the first person to win the event after qualifying through an online

tournament.

This set off a worldwide poker craze that continues to this day, driven by TV channels and the continued success of unheralded amateurs who come up through online tournaments to become household names in poker.

Now 36, Moneymaker travels the world as a Team PokerStars touring pro, competing in the States, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and now Africa, for the first time.

The WPT Emperors Palace Poker Classic runs from October 19 to 26, as a fully sanctioned event on the World Poker Tour.

The proposed \$1-m prize pot is dependent on buy-ins, but interest is already running high.

The main WPT event kicks off on October 22.

The winner of the event receives automatic entry into the 2013 WPT World Championship, in Las Vegas.

Fans will be excited to know that the popular action-packed Omaha Tournament has been added to the agenda, and will be the biggest Omaha Tournament ever to be held in South Africa.

"One of our goals was to give players exactly what they were looking for and we've had numerous requests for the Omaha Tournament," said Gary Lentin, from Shuffle Up Poker.

"The WPT responded positively and the WPT Emperors Palace Omaha Classic was added to the schedule."



Poker legend Chris Moneymaker will be at Emperors Palace for the World Poker Tournament taking place in October.

