

= Million Dollar Challenge (poker) =

Million Dollar Challenge (also referred to as the PokerStars Million Dollar Challenge and PokerStars.net Million Dollar Challenge) is the most watched poker show in television history . It is sponsored by PokerStars . The show , which airs on the Fox Broadcasting Company , debuted on October 11 , 2009 . The show is hosted by Chris Rose and features Daniel Negreanu . The first season included five episodes following the FOX network Sunday National Football League coverage . The finale aired on December 27 , 2009 . The eight @-@ episode season 2 premiered on September 19 , 2010 and is scheduled to conclude on December 12 .

= = Show description = =

Million Dollar Challenge is a poker game show where amateur poker players attempt to defeat celebrities , professional poker players and , eventually , Daniel Negreanu in order to win the show 's grand prize , \$ 1 million . In the first round , the amateur (with Negreanu at their side , acting as their coach and lending advice) must defeat a celebrity such as Jayde Nicole , Jerome Bettis , Joanna Krupa , John Salley or Tito Ortiz . If the contestant is able to defeat the celebrity the contestant wins a trip to the Bahamas and advances to the second round . In the second round , the amateur (with Negreanu now helping them from a sound proof booth , giving them advice through a listening device in the amateur 's ear) must defeat a professional poker player such as Vanessa Rousso , Barry Greenstein , Joe Cada or Chris Moneymaker . If the contestant is able to defeat the professional the contestant wins \$ 25 @,@ 000 in addition to the trip to the Bahamas . At this point , the amateur has a decision to make . Keep the money and walk away \$ 25 @,@ 000 richer , or risk the money (the trip is still theirs to keep) and play Daniel Negreanu heads @-@ up for \$ 100 @,@ 000 , knowing that if they lose they walk away with nothing but the trip to the Bahamas . In the season finale , the champions from each episode compete against each other in a sit @-@ n @-@ go tournament , the winner of which plays Negreanu for \$ 1 million .

= = Season 1 = =

The first three episodes of the season were the three most @-@ watched Poker television shows in U.S. history . The show aired on Sundays after the FOX National Football League coverage . In the first episode that aired on October 11 , contestant Father Andrew Trapp defeated John Salley , Rousso and Negreanu , winning \$ 100 @,@ 000 and a trip to the Bahamas in the process , all of which he promised to donate to his church in Garden City , South Carolina . Trapp also won the chance to play in a mini @-@ tournament (Episode 5) , the winner of which would play Negreanu for \$ 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 . On October 18 , after contestant Tracy Nguyen defeated Bettis and won a trip to the Bahamas , but lost to Barry Greenstein , the next contestant Sergeant Denny Luna defeated Nicole , Moneymaker to win \$ 25 @,@ 000 and a trip to the Bahamas . Luna then chose to walk away (and not risk the \$ 25 @,@ 000 he had already won) rather than face Negreanu in the \$ 100 @,@ 000 match . On the November 22 episode after contestant Oluwasegun Odumuyiwa lost to Bettis , Brian Barboza defeated Nicole , Rousso and Negreanu , winning \$ 100 @,@ 000 and a trip to the Bahamas . Barboza also won the chance to play in a mini @-@ tournament , the winner of which would play Negreanu for \$ 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 . In December Joanna Krupa and Joe Cada were announced as newly added as celebrity and professional opponents . Ortiz and Krupa appeared on the fourth episode , which aired on December 13 . Cada appeared , but he did not play a hand . Dwayne Buth , playing on behalf of the Cal State Fullerton wrestling team , lost to Ortiz . Mike Kosowski , a first responder during the September 11 attacks lost to Krupa . The final airing of the competition among the previous winners was expected on December 27 . However , when the contestants on the fourth episode all lost , a single table tournament was held to determine the fourth contestant . Kosowski won and then bested Luna , Barboza and Trapp , in that order , in the Challenge of Champions for a \$ 100 @,@ 000 prize and a chance to play Negreanu for \$ 1million . In three hands of heads up play , he bested Negreanu .

= = Season 2 = =

Season two premiered on September 19 during the second weekend of the 2010 NFL season . The program will continue to air on the FOX network as a companion to the NFL programming on the seven weekends that FOX does not have doubleheaders (September 19 and 26 , October 10 and 24 , November 7 and 21 and December 12) . The show will air before or after the football game depending upon the region of the country .

= = Critical review = =

Professional poker player Doyle Brunson has been critical of both Million Dollar Challenge and its contemporary rival Face the Ace as terrible shows unlikely to draw viewers . Negreanu responded , via blog , to this type of criticism that the show is not intended for the serious poker player , but rather is aimed at more casual audience . There was some controversy about a poker playing priest on national television that sparked theological debate .