



The plan of resistance to the Amaya's policy

This is a draft of the plan; it is created in order to take opinion of the community. After the feedback I will update the plan and make it more specific. Please don't waste time translating it, it is needless at the moment. I appreciate Khishtaki, L_gravas and many others for their advice and their help in finding crucial data, laying down requirements and making other valuable suggestions.

What's going on

In summer of 2014 our favorite PokerStars was purchased by the Amaya company. Unfortunately, the new owner set a course for transforming online poker from an intellectual game into some lottery-like activity.

By using its monopoly position on the market, Amaya took a set of measures intended to drive regular players out of poker and make a number of disciplines become unprofitable. At that, the money extracted from regulars was never invested to support the amateur players: it was withdrawn from the turnover and peculated by PokerStars.

It is a first shot on the road chosen by the company. The increase of rake in low stakes and in MTT as well as turning poker into some kind of a lottery or a con game is around the corner.

“

We didn't buy Rational because of gambling – we wanted it badly because it had 89 million consumers.

David Baazov, CEO Amaya Inc.



What's going on

Poker that we love

Poker as sport

Poker as a show

Poker as a game of intellect

Poker as a communication environment

Poker as a battle of skill and intellect

Poker as an ascent to the top

Poker as overcoming your self

Poker that Amaya offers

Poker as a lottery

Poker as thimblery

Poker as a roulette

Poker as a one-armed bandit

The face of our poker is a successful athlete who made it to the top thanks to his intellect, hard work and talent.

The face of Amaya's poker — a grinning housewife with a happy lottery ticket.

The thing that's going on concerns everyone, even those whose profit isn't affected at the moment. It's about the future of online poker. If we don't stand up to Amaya today, tomorrow the changes will affect every poker discipline.

Some figures

According to MacroPoker, the statistical service, 94 million dollars will be extracted from the poker ecosystem in a year; it's about 14% of pure rake collected by PokerStars (rake minus rakeback).

De facto, we're talking the increase by 14% in the cost of the game.

It means that plenty of winning regulars will become losing ones, and some of the poker disciplines will have the character of a lottery: no one will be able to win in such games.

Some disciplines will disappear from the face of the earth: there simply won't be any tables in them.

As is well-known, PokerStars is planning to drastically reduce the profit of Supernova and Supernova Elite players. Taking into consideration that concurrently the profit of players with lower statuses will not be increased, the decisions made, as such, increase the rake for the whole pool of players, which will lead to decrease of the amount of winning players.

B. Sulsky, highroller

+14 %
the cost of the game.

Why it's important to resist

There are several reasons that make the resistance so important.

①

The changes will affect everyone

The changes will affect players at every stakes, not only the high stakes pros. The money is being extracted from the ecosystem.

②

Poker will no longer be a game of skill

It's not even about the money; it's about poker that we used to love: poker as sport and the intellectual game.

③

It's only the beginning

The first step is always followed by the second. If you think you'll hopefully avoid these changes, you're wrong: it is not unlikely that in only one year from now your discipline may technically become unbeatable.

④

We will win

PokerStars bets on our disorderliness. 15 thousand of players out of 89 Mio. registered users generate as much as the half of the rake. We can and we will win.

We demand

Demand #1.

Poker should not turn into a lottery; it should remain the game of skill and intellect.

We demand that current proportion of winning and losing players (both in general and among regular players – professionals and amateurs) is sustained in every discipline. This proportion should remain as it is; it is the criteria for healthy environment in the poker community. While keeping this proportion, PokerStars may opt to take any measures relating to the increase or the decrease of the rake. Meanwhile, the company should not introduce changes which result in significant slump of the winning player's average monthly profit.

We demand

Demand #2.

The changes must be expected.

The changes should be introduced seamlessly. SNE is a 2-year status. Many players spent the whole year playing poker and making money for PokerStars day and night. Such changes should be introduced with an advance notification a year before they take effect.

We demand

Demand #3.

Climbing the higher stakes should not be accompanied by worsening of the rakeback conditions.

The rate of crediting of the VPPs cannot be less than at lower stakes. According to this, we demand to bring back the rakeback in high stakes games.

We demand

For the purpose of negotiating with PokerStars regarding the admission of these demands by the company, we will create a protest group which will transform into the poker player union after reaching its goals.

For the purpose of further control of meeting our demands by the PokerStars company, we insist that two representatives of the poker community should be introduced into the PokerStars' Board of Directors, who shall have veto over the implementation of changes into the rules of the game (without the right to vote on other items in the agenda).

The concepts of the resistance

To be heard by the PokerStars management, the protest should satisfy the following:

①

We must inflict real financial harm to PokerStars

②

The protest must be growing, it must not fade away

These obvious concepts, however, pose very serious requirements as to organizing the protest.

The concepts of the resistance

In a year, PokerStars will have extracted 94 Mio. dollars from us. And they will stick to doing it until they realize that the protest will take away more from them.

We must involve the overwhelming majority of poker professionals and a significant part of amateur players in the protest.

We must tear down the key figures of PokerStars (revenue, EBITDA) and provoke the fall of their stock. The Achilles' heel of PokerStars is the publicity of their company and their dependence on the regular players.

If we manage to join our forces – their bluff will not go through, and the changes will be revised. If not – we'll lose.

That's why we're offering a strict plan of actions, the only recipe for success. And we must underline that we can't starve them into surrender. We must launch a series of hard and decisive blows.

\$94.000.000

The concepts of the resistance

The arithmetics of the protest

If we manage to involve in the protest 90% of SNE, 75% of Supernova and 40% of “platinum” players – about 8,500 players in total – PokerStars will lose 30% of pure rake collected (rake minus rakeback). This is exactly our goal – shortfall by one third. At that, at least 15% of shortfall must be reached in late December so it gets reflected in Amaya’s annual report. It’s obvious enough that a week’s shortfall of 30% (4 million dollars in real figures) is going to be a severe blow for PokerStars, resulting in imminent fall of stocks.

Please note that it’s important to sustain the level of the protest from the middle of December and right till the end, which is likely to come with the publishing of Amaya’s annual report.



The concepts of the resistance

Concept #1.

The media support of the protest is no less important than the actual refusal to play.

We must make the protest a bright media event. Our goal is to make the vast majority of players want to take part in this protest. It is also important to attract attention of sports mass media, as well as Amaya's shareholders and creditors.

To do that, the protest group will be issuing an action leaflet on a daily basis, recording video messages from the opinion shapers and creating threads on forums.

The concepts of the resistance

Concept #2.

Talk to everyone.

The poker community is isolated and compact – everyone knows everyone in 3 degrees of separation. We must get a clear answer from every player as to whether he or she is going to take part in the protest or not. We must “sell” our protest to every player. When we’re addressing the crowd, every other person would be like: “Well, okay, let someone else protest for me, and I have a family to fend for.” We must create the lists and achieve 80% of regulars take part.

The concepts of the resistance

Concept #3.

Strict rules.

Every protester should incur liabilities as to the terms and the form of the protest. The protest within which everyone plays his own game will quickly fade away, and we can't let it happen.

Concept #4.

No sabotage.

We must avoid the situation when people are like: "I don't wanna take part 'cause if I sign up, others will make a draft on a fund." We will collect the signatures in the "If 80% of my stakes players sign up – count me in" format, and then strictly observe treaty commitments.

The concepts of the resistance

Concept #5.

We're already supporting the existent activities:

Redon's action of December, 1-3, actions by Storo08 and mihhhey, and Tiltbook action. We mustn't cut one another's throat and struggle for power.

Concept #6.

Business-approach.

The protest is a business project. With its terms, results, responsibilities for branches, KPI, budgets, coordination system and a strict plan.

Types of activities

Organization:

Business planning, organizing local leaders, searching and hiring employees, organizing information exchange, coordinating activities, negotiating with PokerStars..

Media:

Recording video messages from opinion shapers, issuing action leaflets, communicating with mass media.

Game:

Withdrawing funds from poker site, cease playing “till the end”, clearing lobby in HU disciplines, breaking tournaments.

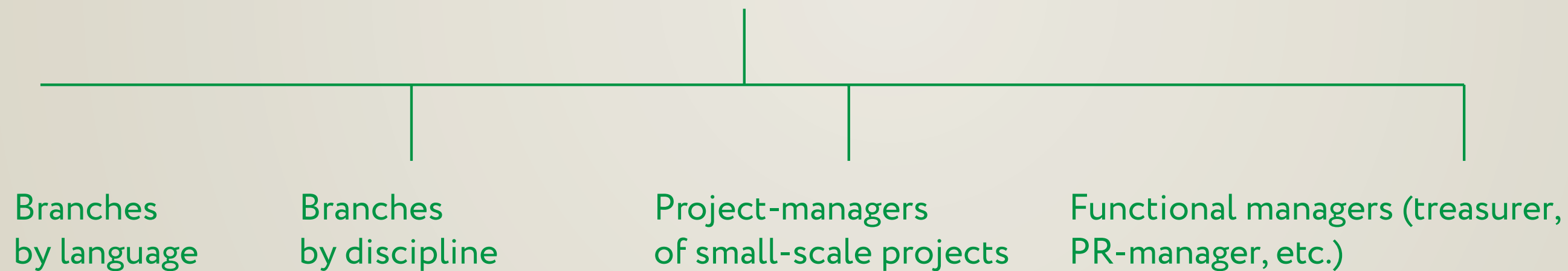
Sales:

Delivering information about protests to other players, acquiring their consent or refusal to take part in actions, propagating within community.

The infrastructure of the protest



The general headquarters



The infrastructure of the protest

The general headquarters coordinate the protest.

The coordinators of the branches report directly to the HQ officer:

Branches by language (country).

Branches by discipline/stakes.

The role of coordinators is to involve in the protest as many players of their discipline and stakes as possible, according to the algorithms described further.

And also:

Managers of small-scale projects (e.g. recording of the video messages at EPT Prague).

Functional managers (treasurer, PR-manager, etc.).

Under HQ, we'll create the protest supporting fund which will be responsible for pay outs to the contractors who devoted to the protest plenty of their time and worked on the contract base: project-managers, designers, mathematical analysts, PR-managers, forum moderators, etc.

All the activities will take place on a private forum which incorporates:

- General section with the chronicles of the protest;
- Sections by countries;
- Sections by disciplines.

The purpose of the forum is to teamwork the list of players: composing the lists, searching for players you know, targeted personal agitation, updating the players' statuses.

Gaming activities protest

The activities related to inflicting the real damage to the site are the key ones.

Within the protest:

HU players clear the lobby from weaker players by seating at the tables and explaining the situation, or just cease playing.

6-max and 9-max players (cash and SNG), as well as Spin&Go players withdraw their bankrolls and just cease playing.

MTT players withdraw maximum of their bankrolls and periodically take actions to break the regular tournaments. First comes the Super Tuesday, and then we'll start breaking the top-reg's load.

Three concepts are of the most importance:

Every player starts his own personal protest anytime he pleases but from the 1st of December to the 1st of January. At that, we will agitate for earlier start of the protest.

The protest ends when and only when all of the protest demands are met, or when the HQ releases new instructions.

The form of the protest is fixed: only after signing under one of the above mentioned forms of the protest, the player gets invited to the private forum.

Gaming activities protest

When registering at the forum, all of the players must sign the agreement:

Starting from the date (____) and until all of the protest group's demands are met in full (or until the HQ releases new instructions), I agree to take part in the protest in the following format: (format of participation) under the condition that no less than 50% of regulars at my stakes take part in it too.

Media activities

The media activities start with the open letter which is to be signed by famous players and sent to the PS management, Amaya's shareholders and creditors, and published in social networks.

The important part of the protest is the video messages from known players. We'll start recording them in early December, most of them will be done at EPT. We'll increase publications step by step: starting with 1 a week up to daily publications by the end of December.

We'll come in contact with the mass media: especially sports and business ones, and issue press-releases with the chronicles of the protest on a weekly basis.

We'll issue action leaflets which observe interesting forum discussions, video messages from the regs, outline the damage done.

The media activities reach the peak by the end of December, its high level should be maintained up to the publication of Amaya's annual report.

Players involvement system

Involving as many players as possible is the key to success. As we stated above, to reach PokerStars shortfall by one third it's enough to involve 8,500 players – a realistic figure, taking into consideration that the pilot version of the protest on 1–3 of December gathered 1,000 players.

However, reaching these figures requires a system of personal sales – when the player is signed up for the protest by his friends or acquaintances.

In general, the algorithm looks like this:

- We make the list of players in every discipline and every stakes. We'll use mining for cash games, taking the data on other disciplines from MacroPoker.

- We inhabit corresponding sections of the protest forum with the participants of the pilot protest, register them in the list (if they have agreed to the terms of the protest).

- We draw up a table: we'll try to find among protesters an acquaintance of every regular in the list.

- We initiate communication with the players who are not in the protest yet.

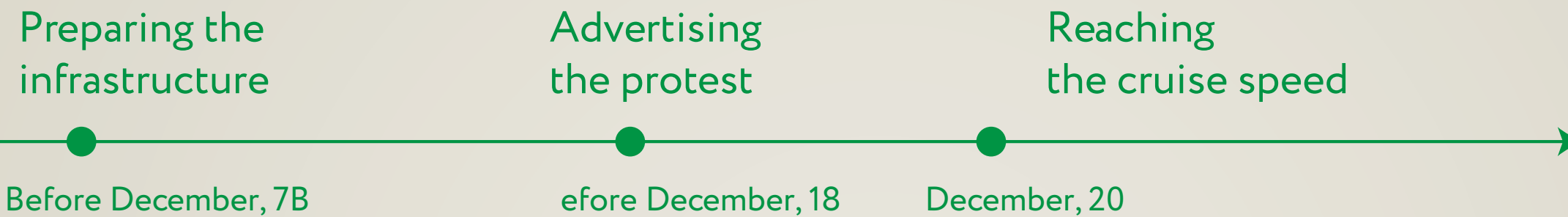
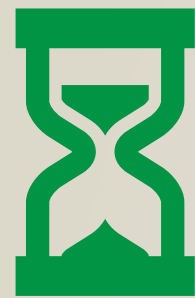
- We repeat the cycle after the update. Every regular of every stakes must have a mark: participation from (the date) / no participation / no contact with the community whatsoever.

The registration of participants will be carried out in two stages:

- 1) The registration of the first wave of players to reach the minimum amount of participants (before December, 10).

- 2) Constant update of the list of protesters by repeatedly revising the list of players.

Timeline



Before December, 7.
Preparing the infrastructure

The goal: to create the infrastructure

- Resource planning
- Creating a multilingual presentation
- Deploying a forum
- Pilot protest on 1–3 of December
- Forming a team of the protest group
- Publishing the open letter
- Preparing the lists of players

Before December, 18.
Advertising the protest

The goal: to involve in the protest as many players as possible

- Launching first longterm boycotts
- Recording videos at EPT
- Processing of the players: increasing the number of signers to 4,000

After December, 20.
Reaching the cruise speed

The goal: to inflict real financial harm to PokerStars, have them meet the demands of the protest group

- Distributing the media
- Issuing action leaflets
- Intaking new players

Damage done (the plan):

December, 14–20: \$1,000,000 a week
(done by reaching 2,000 players).

December, 21–27: \$2,000,000 a week
(done by reaching 4,000 players).

December, 28–???: \$3,000,000 a week
(done by reaching 6,000 players).

The first week of January and further — no less than 4–5 Mio.
dollars a week (done by reaching 8,000 players).



We will win together