



2010 World Series of Poker Presented by Jack Link's Beef Jerky
Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada

Official Report
Event #1
Casino Employees Championship – No-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In: \$500
Number of Entries: 721
Total Net Prize Pool: \$324,450
Number of Places Paid: 72
First Place Prize: \$71,424
May 28-29, 2010

Tournament Headlines:

Hoai D. Pham Wins First WSOP Gold Bracelet of 2010

Poker Dealer from San Diego Wins Casino Employees Championship

2010 WSOP Begins in Grand Style – Thousands Pack Rio for Opening Weekend

One Gold Bracelet Won – 56 More to Go!

Jonathan Kotula, 2008 Casino Employees Champion, Finishes Tenth

Overview

The first gold bracelet of the 2010 World Series of Poker was won by Hoai D. Pham. He is a 43-year-old poker dealer who lives in San Diego, CA. Pham was born in Vietnam and is one of many WSOP gold bracelet winners from Southeast Asia. Pham currently works at the Village Club Casino, in Chula Vista, CA. Pham won the 2010 Casino Employees Championship, officially designated as Event #1. This competition has traditionally been the first event to be played at the WSOP since its inception in 2000. The top ten finishers included several poker dealers, who reside mostly in the western U.S. Jonathan Kotula, who was the winner of this event in 2008, posted an impressive showing as the tenth-place finisher.

The Winner – Hoai D. Pham

The 2010 World Series of Poker “Casino Employees Champion” is Hoai D. Pham from San Diego, CA.

Pham is a poker dealer. He works at the Village Club Casino, which is a small establishment located in Chula Vista, CA. Pham describes the Village Club Casino as a place with many friendly people. He considers much of the staff to be like his family.

Pham's name is pronounced as follows: “Hah-Why Fam”

Pham first started playing poker in 1995.

Pham plays poker mostly online. His favorite poker games are Seven-Card Stud and Pot-Limit Omaha. Pham also

plays in several tournaments each year, mostly in the Los Angeles area.

Pham is the father of one child.

This was Pham's biggest cash, to date. This was also his first major tournament victory.

Pham previously lived in Europe before arriving to live in the United States. While in Europe, he previously cashed once at a major tournament held in Vienna, Austria back in 2002.

Pham has lived in the United States since 2003.

Pham collected \$71,424 for first place. He was also awarded his first WSOP gold bracelet.

Pham expects to play in more WSOP events this year, primarily focusing on the upcoming \$1,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournaments.

According to official records, Pham now has 1 win, 1 final table appearance, and 1 in-the-money finish at the WSOP.

Pham currently has \$71,424 in WSOP winnings.

At the poker table, Fellows wore a 1920's style drivers cap, a vest with a colorful necktie, and a pair of sunglasses.

Pham's favorite poker player is Barry Greenstein.

Winner Quotes:

On winning the Casino Employees Championship and his first-ever WSOP gold bracelet: "I feel very good. I am very, very happy."

On returning home and going back to work with a WSOP gold bracelet: "I can't wait to tell everybody. I told my boss I would take vacation to (play in this tournament). So now, I get to go back to them and show them what I won."

On how he feels at 5:00 am after a long 15-hour session on Day Two: "I feel very, very tired right now."

The Final Table

The final table contained no former WSOP gold bracelet winners.

The final table was comprised of nine players, which included the following occupations:

Poker Dealer -- 4

Casino Games Dealer (Non-Poker) – 1

Floorman/Supervisor -- 2

Administrative/Finance – 1

Bartender – 1

All final table players were from the United States. However, two of the players were born abroad. Four different states were represented at the final table – including California, Nevada, Washington, and Georgia. Players from Washington State took three of the top five spots.

Final table participants ranged in age from 26 (youngest) to 48 (oldest). Six of the nine players were aged in their 20s.

The runner up was A.J. Vea (a.k.a. Arthur Vea). He is a 27-year-old poker dealer from Union City, CA.

The third-place finisher was Chris Reider. He is a table games dealer from Everett, WA. Reider had previously cashed in several smaller events and won a few local events. However, this marked his biggest payout ever. He is a former U.S. Navy veteran who someday hopes to make it as a poker professional.

The fourth-place finisher was Matt Hollinger, from Vancouver, WA. He works as a casino table games manager.

The fifth-place finisher was Patrick Silvey, from Spokane, WA. He is a poker dealer at the Northern Quest Casino.

The sixth-place finisher was Kent Washington, from Oakland, CA. He is a poker dealer at Lucky Chances Casino. Washington has serious aspirations about playing poker professionally. He currently has five cashes at the WSOP, including his best finish – a third-place showing at the 2004 WSOP. Washington has 40 major cashes overall and nearly \$400,000 in live tournament winnings, to date.

The seventh-place finisher was D.J. Villegas, from Valinda Heights, CA. He works as a floorman at the Commerce Casino in Los Angeles.

The eighth-place finisher was Jeffrey Bennett, from Atlanta, GA. He is a bartender. This was Bennett's first time to attend the WSOP.

The ninth-place finisher was Yuta Motsyama, from Las Vegas, NV. He is a financial analyst who is originally from Japan. Prior to working in the casino industry, Motsyama was a former racecar driving instructor for the Mario Andretti Racing School.

Other In-the-Money Finishers

Other former WSOP gold bracelet finishers who cashed in this event included – Jonathan Kotula. He won the Casino Employees Championship in 2008. Kotula finished in tenth place, one position off the official final table.

Former WSOP Tournament Director Jack McClelland, who oversaw operations during 1984 through 1998 at Binion's Horseshoe, finished in 22nd place. This marked his fifth time to cash in a WSOP event.

David Patent, who formally worked as a Harrah's executive at the Rio and Flamingo, finished in 11th place.

Ty Stewart, Vice President of the World Series of Poker for Harrah's Interactive Entertainment, cashed in 62nd place.

Odds and Ends

The defending champion from 2009 was Andrew Cohen, from Las Vegas, NV. He entered this year's tournament, but did not cash. Cohen went out on a horrible beat on Day One. He moved all-in holding AK and was called by a player with AQ. The flop was a nightmare for Cohen – three queens! Cohen was paralyzed and drawing dead after the flop and ended up losing to four-of-a-kind.

Attendance for this tournament declined from last year's number, when there were 866 entries. This year's event attracted 721 entries.

The tournament began in grand fashion with WSOP Tournament Director Jack Effel standing tall and proud on the Pavilion Stage welcoming players to the first event on this year's schedule. In his opening remarks, Effel said, "All of you are special to us. Without casino employees, there is no live poker. Without casino employees, there is no Las Vegas. Without casino employees, there is no WSOP." The last comment evoked loud cheers from the gallery of players and spectators.

The tournament was played over two consecutive days – which extended by default into a third day when the final table stretched into Sunday morning. The final table was played inside the Amazon Room, on an ESPN designated feature table. Despite the late hour, a large crowd of spectators watched most of the action.

The Casino Employees Championship is not considered an "open" event, since entry is restricted to workers in the gaming industry. This is one of three non-open events on the 2010 WSOP schedule. The other non-open events are the Ladies World Championship and the Seniors World Championship. All the other 54 tournaments are open events, since anyone over the age of 21 is eligible to enter.

The official WSOP gold bracelet ceremony takes place on the day following the winner's victory (or some hours later when the tournament runs past midnight). The ceremony takes place inside The Pavilion, which is the expansive main tournament room host all noon starts this year. The ceremony begins at the conclusion of the first break of the noon tournament. The ceremony usually starts around 2:20 pm. The national anthem of the winner's nation is played. The entire presentation is open to public and media. Video and photography is permitted by both public and members of the media.

The winner Hoai D. Pham requested that the national anthem of Vietnam be played at his WSOP gold bracelet ceremony.

Event History

The first Casino Employees Championship was held at the 2000 WSOP. It was then called the "Dealers World Poker Championship." At the time, the tournament was only open to casino dealers. The following year, all casino employees became eligible. The inaugural event attracted only 109 entries. It doubled in size the next year due to the expanded eligibility.

The Casino Employees Championship was initially added to the WSOP schedule to recognize the considerable contributions of many dedicated professionals in the gaming industry. It has been an official gold bracelet event during all 11 years it's been held.

From 2000 to 2003, the Casino Employees Championship was played as a Limit Hold'em tournament. Since 2004, the event has been a No-Limit Hold'em tournament.

The largest turnout in history for this event took place at the 2006 WSOP when 1,232 players entered.

This event has traditionally been held either at the very start of the WSOP, or the very end. It has been the first event of the WSOP during the last two years.

The previous list of previous winners of the Casino Employees Championship includes:

Andrew Cohen (2009)
Jonathan Kotula (2008)
Eric Narciso (2007)
Chris Gros (2006)
Andy Nguyen (2005)
Carl "Coach" Nessel (2004)
David Lukaszewski (2003)
David Warga (2002)
Travis Jonas (2001)
Dave Alizadeh (2000)

No event champion has ever repeated, nor won any other WSOP gold bracelet.

Tournament Play

The \$500 buy-in Casino Employees Championship was a No-Limit Hold'em competition. The tournament attracted 721 entries. The total prize pool amounted to \$324,450. The top 72 finishers collected prize money.

The chip leader at the end of Day One was Kent Washington, from Oakland, CA. He ended up finishing in sixth place.

The chip leader coming into the final table was Hoai D. Pham. He ended up winning the tournament.

Pham was never in serious danger at the final table. However, Pham was very fortunate early in the tournament when on Day One he committed much of his stack with QJ after flopping a jack. His opponent had pocket aces. Pham caught a queen on the turn to make two pair and ended up winning the hand. He was in comfortable chip position from that point forward.

Pham later stated he was fortunate to be dealt several big hands. He stated he was dealt pocket aces about 12 times and was dealt pocket kings 8 times during the duration of the tournament.

When heads-up play began, Pham enjoyed a sizable chip lead over A.J. Vea. The heads-up match lasted only about 15 minutes.

The final hand of the tournament came when Pham was dealt Ac Ad. Vea was dealt 4s 4c. After the flop came Qh 7d 2c, Pham moved all-in and Vea made a crying call after deliberating for a few minutes. The board ran out 5d and 6c, giving Pham the victory with pocket aces.

The tournament ended at Level 22.

The final table officially lasted 4 hours and 50 minutes.

The tournament officially began on Friday, May 28th at noon. The tournament officially ended on Sunday, May 30th, at 4:50 am.

2010 WSOP Statistics

Through the conclusion of Event #1, the 2010 WSOP has attracted 721 entries. \$324,450 in prize money has been awarded to winners, so far.

Note: All results are now official and may be reprinted by media. If you are posting these results on a website, we would appreciate providing a link back to: www.wsop.com. Thank you.

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