



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

Official Report
Event #2
Poker Players Championship
Buy-In: \$50,000
Number of Entries: 116
Total Net Prize Pool: \$5,568,000
Number of Places Paid: 16
First Place Prize: \$1,559,046
May 28-June 1, 2010

Tournament Headlines:

Michael Mizrachi Grinds Out Victory in 2010 Poker Players Championship

Famed "Grinder" Collects First WSOP Gold Bracelet, Chip Reese Memorial Trophy,
plus \$1,559,046 Cash Prize

Russian Banker Vladimir Schmelev Finishes as Runner Up

David Oppenheim Comes Close to Incredible Comeback – Finishes Third

Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi Eliminates Brother Robert Mizrachi at Final Table

Overview

The inaugural Poker Players Championship was won by Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi. He has been one of the most successful tournament pros over the last six years, now with nearly \$9 million in accumulated tournament winnings. Mizrachi had previously won just about every major title in poker except a WSOP gold bracelet. Today, he achieved that milestone by pulling off a masterful victory in the biggest buy-in tournament of the year. The final table included Mizrachi playing against his brother Robert Mizrachi, who ended up finishing fifth. This marked the highest finish by two family members in WSOP history. Three different nations were represented at the final table, including the United States, Sweden, and Russia. "The Grinder," cheered on by much of the Mizrachi family, won \$1,559,046. In addition to the coveted WSOP gold bracelet, Mizrachi was also presented with the Chip Reese Memorial Trophy.

The Champion – Michael “the Grinder” Mizrachi

The 2010 Poker Players Championship winner is Michael “the Grinder” Mizrachi, from Miramar, FL.

Mizrachi is age 29. He was born in Miami, FL.

Mizrachi is a professional poker player. He has been playing full-time since 2004. Prior to playing poker, Mizrachi was a college student. He was studying to become a doctor, but decided instead to pursue a poker career.

Mizrachi is married. He has three children.

Mizrachi’s father is of Iraqi-Jewish decent. Mizrachi and most of his family are fluent in Hebrew.

Although Mizrachi has been one of poker’s top tournament players over the past several years, he has run poorly during the past year or so. Mizrachi’s financial pressures were widely-documented in the media and in various social media networks. The personal setbacks created enormous tension coming into this year’s WSOP. However, Mizrachi remained focused and won what many consider to be not only the toughest competition in poker, but one of the most prestigious, as well.

Prior to this event, Mizrachi had won just about every major title in poker except a WSOP gold bracelet.

Mizrachi was Card Player Magazine’s “Player of the Year” in 2006.

Mizrachi’s first recorded tournament cash took place in March 2004.

Mizrachi collected \$1,559,046 for first place in the 2010 Poker Players Championship. He was presented with his first WSOP gold bracelet.

According to official records, Mizrachi now has 20 cashes, four final table appearances, and one win. His career WSOP earnings now total \$2,156,322.

Mizrachi’s last WSOP-related cash took place more than a year ago in the WSOP Circuit Main Event championship held at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. He finished second in that tournament.

Mizrachi is called “the Grinder” due to his never-give-up mentality. Mizrachi certainly does not fit the mold of the traditional poker grinder, however. The term is usually meant to describe a tight player. Mizrachi is actually one of poker’s most aggressive and unpredictable tournament pros.

Other members of the Mizrachi family have adopted the “Grinder” moniker. His is married to Mrs. Grinder. His mother is Mama Grinder. His children each have been called Baby Grinder at various times.

Mizrachi stated he followed the advice of some other poker pros -- including J.C. Tran, Mike Matusow, and Robert Mizrachi. At one point when things were not going well at the final table and Mizrachi was on a break, Matusow encouraged Mizrachi to do jumping jacks in a back hallway to keep the blood flowing during the long tournament.

Mizrachi is the younger brother of fellow tournament pro Robert Mizrachi, a former WSOP gold bracelet winner.

Both Mizrachi brothers reached the final table. This was only the third time in WSOP history that two close family members had made it to a final table together. They become the highest-finishing family duo in history, eclipsing the 1995 feat by brother-sister combo Annie Duke (6th) and Howard Lederer (9th) in the Pot-Limit Hold'em event. The other duo to make a final table was brothers Ross Boatman (7th) and Barney Boatman in the 2002 Pot Limit Omaha competition.

The only other brothers to both hold WSOP gold bracelets are Grant and Blair Hinkle, from the Kansas City, MO area.

Winner Quotes:

On having the pressure of winning a WSOP gold bracelet now off his shoulders: "If I was going to win a gold bracelet, I definitely wanted to win this event."

When asked about his previous status being listed near-universally as one of the top players never to have won a WSOP gold bracelet: "Well, take me off the list, then."

When asked about the meaning of winning the Chip Reese Memorial Trophy: "To win Chip Reese's Trophy is really special to me. I hope to be able to honor him in the way he deserves."

When asked about some ups and downs in the tournament: "Grinding is the Mizrachi style."

When asked about facing his brother Robert at the final table: "There's no competition between us. We root for each other all the time."

On being the player who eliminated his brother Robert from the tournament: "At least I put his chips to good use."

The Final Table

The final table consisted of three former WSOP gold bracelet winners: John Juanda (4 wins), Daniel Alaei (2 wins), and Robert Mizrachi (1 win).

Three different nations were represented at the final table: the United States, Sweden, and Russia.

The final table began eight-handed. This was due to the mix of games played the previous four days, which necessitated an eight-player format.

Final table participants ranged in age from 23 to 38. In what is believed to be his first time as a final table's "senior" player, John Juanda fit the bill as the elder statesman. The youngest player at the final table was David Baker.

The runner up was Vladimir Schmelev, from St. Petersburg, Russia. Schmelev had previously cashed in several European tournaments. This was his best showing in a WSOP event to date.

The third-place finisher was David Oppenheim (Los Angeles, CA). His performance was undoubtedly as impressive as anyone's at the final table. Oppenheim started play with the lowest stack by far, yet managed to stay alive long enough to double up a few times. He then made a major move when play became five-handed and actually catapulted into the chip lead

when there were three players remaining. But Oppenheim suffered a disastrous final hour and went out in third place. His final hand came with 8d 8c against Mizrachi's Kc Qs. A queen fell on the river – as the final board showed 9d 6s 4c 7c Qd, giving Mizrachi the pot with a pair of queens.

Oppenheim said afterward: "I'm pretty happy with the way I played today. And that's what it's all about. You just make the best decisions you can. Of course, it's disappointing not to win, but it's been a great tournament."

The fourth-place finisher was John Juanda (Las Vegas, NV). He is a four-time WSOP gold bracelet winner. Juanda's biggest win came two years ago in the 2008 WSOP Europe Main Event championship. Juanda moved all in with Kd 9d and got a call from Vladimir Schmelev with Th Td. The board came Ah Ac 4h Qc 4c giving the Russian the pot, and putting Juanda out in fourth place.

Juanda was the winner of the longest final table in WSOP history. His win in London at WSOP Europe two years ago lasted more than 19 hours.

The fifth-place finisher was Robert Mizrachi (Miramar, FL). He won the \$10,000 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha championship in 2006. This marked his 18th time to cash at the WSOP. Mizrachi was eliminated holding Ac Th against Qh Jc. The final board ran out 8s 3c 2h Jh 2c, making a pair of jacks the winner. The evil culprit who eliminated Robert Mizrachi? His brother, Michael. The Mizrachi brothers were understandably eager to create a storybook finish by playing heads up for the championship. They didn't get that far, but still put on a memorable display that is sure to be much of the focus when this tournament goes down in the history books.

The sixth-place finisher was David Baker (Las Vegas, NV). He is a 23-year-old poker pro originally from Minnesota. He now lives in Las Vegas. Baker was eliminated holding Ah Js against Michael Mizrachi's Ac Kh. The board ran out Kd Td 8d 6h 4s, which meant the AK played. Baker has accumulated more than \$700,000 in career tournament earnings. This marked his highest WSOP finish to date.

The seventh-place finisher was Daniel Alaei (Los Angeles, CA). Alaei previously won gold bracelets in Deuce-to-Seven Lowball and Omaha High-Low Split. He was expected to be a major force given his talent and experience but went out during the fourth hour of play.

The eighth-place finisher was Mikael Thuritz, who is originally from Stockholm, Sweden. He was eliminated about two hours into play. Thuritz began play at the final table with about an average-sized stack but was never a serious factor.

The number of hands played at the final table was 235, making this the shortest finale (by number of hands) in the history of this event and its \$50,000 H.O.R.S.E. predecessor.

The final table officially began at 3:45 pm PST and ended at 3:56 am PST the following morning. Clocking in at just over 12 hours, this was also the shortest \$50,000 buy-in finale in the five years such a tournament has been held.

Other In-the-Money Finishers

The top 16 finishers collected prize money. Aside from those who made the final table, former WSOP gold bracelet finishers who cashed in this event included – Nick Schulman (9th), Abe Mosseri (11th), Lyle Berman (12th).

Andy Bloch, who was the runner up to Chip Reese in 2006 in what was the longest heads-up

match in WSOP history, was the 16th-place finisher.

The unfortunate "bubble" finisher was former WSOP gold bracelet winner Kirk Morrison (17th place). He painfully missed a guaranteed minimum payout of \$98,330 (16th place prize money) by one spot.

Odds and Ends

This is the 831st gold bracelet event in World Series of Poker history. Note: This figure includes every official WSOP event played, including tournaments during the early years when there were no actual gold bracelets awarded. It also includes the 11 gold bracelets awarded at WSOP Europe (to date).

The tournament began in grand fashion with WSOP Tournament Director Jack Effel unveiling the Chip Reese Memorial Trophy, which carries the names of previous winners. Next, defending champion David Bach made a few remarks. "It's such an honor to have my name inscribed on any trophy with Chip Reese's name on it," Bach said. Doyle Brunson was next to speak to players and spectators. Still emotional more than two years after Reese's untimely December 2007 passing, Brunson noted that Reese was "like a brother." He also noted with no uncertainty whatsoever that "Chip Reese was the greatest all-around poker player who ever lived." Prior to the "Shuffle Up and Deal" announcement by Brunson, a three-minute film tribute to Reese was shown on two portable video screens. Much of the footage came from Reese's victory in the inaugural H.O.R.S.E. World Championship in 2006.

The tournament attracted one of the most accomplished fields in poker history. Among the 116 participants were 54 former WSOP gold bracelet winners. The former champions accounted for a combined total of 123 gold bracelets won -- which represents about 15 percent of all gold bracelets in existence, since 1970.

The defending champion from 2009 was David "Gunslinger" Bach, from Athens, GA. He entered this year's tournament but did not cash. Bach was never a serious factor in this year's competition. He was eliminated in the middle of the pack on Day Two of the five-day tournament.

This was the first event entered by Jeffrey Lisandro, the 2009 WSOP Player of the Year. A few minutes before the tournament began, Lisandro was asked to calculate his own odds of winning a WSOP gold bracelet this year. Never one to confuse fantasy with reality, Lisandro immediately snapped, "two to one." When asked if he would lay 2-1 that he would win a gold bracelet this year, Lisandro smiled. "I mean, the odds are about 2 to 1 against me," he stated.

This was the fifth annual Poker Players Championship. However, during the first four years, the tournament was known as the \$50,000 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. World Championship. The "Poker Players Championship" is expected to remain the official title for many years to come.

This tournament was filmed for broadcast on ESPN. The debut air date will be Tuesday, July 27th from 5-7 pm PST. It is one of three tournaments which will receive extensive coverage this year. The others are the 2010 Tournament of Champions and the WSOP Main Event Championship. ESPN plans to show 33 original hours of new coverage this year.

Of the 116 who entered, the breakdown of nationalities was as follows:

United States (94)

Russia (6)

Canada (5)

Italy (5)

Sweden (2)
Denmark (1)
Lithuania (1)
Netherlands (1)

Defending champion David Bach had some interesting perspectives on the added mix of games to this year's event. Previously, the mix of games included the five HORSE games (plus No-Limit Hold'em on the final table during the 2006 inaugural). This year, Pot-Limit Omaha, Deuce-to-Seven, and No-Limit Hold'em were added. Bach stated: "The fact that it was eight games (instead of 5/6) changed things a lot. There are a lot of hands in Pot-Limit Omaha where the players are correct to put all the money in. So, I think that tends to take some of the skill out of the tournament when Pot-Limit Omaha is part of the mix. If we are going play mixed games, I'd like to see some kind of cap where it's limited as to how much you can win or lose on any one hand."

Bach added: "Since ESPN is the leader in televised poker, I would like to see more of an effort made to show more games other than Hold'em. The Poker Players Championship is the perfect format to do that. I think showing more games is good for the growth of poker."

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 hosting all noon starts this year. The ceremony begins at the conclusion of the first break of the noon tournament, usually about 2:20 pm. The national anthem of the winner's nation is played and the entire presentation is open to public and media. Video and photography are permitted by both public and members of the media.

Mizrachi requested that the national anthem of Israel be played at his WSOP gold bracelet ceremony.

Event History

Costing \$50,000 to enter, this is the highest buy-in tournament in WSOP history. The precursor to this event was the \$50,000 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. World Championship, created in 2006. A high buy-in tournament above the \$10,000 level was first conceived by a group of high-stakes players. The initial thought behind the \$50,000 buy-in tournament was to create poker's version of an all-star game. Poker pro Daniel Negreanu was the concept's strongest advocate. He approached Harrah's Entertainment and the tournament was green-lighted onto the 2006 WSOP schedule by Howard Greenbaum, Vice-President of Specialty Games for Harrah's.

The inaugural 2006 H.O.R.S.E. World Championship was memorable for many reasons. Since the late 1970s, David "Chip" Reese had been widely-regarded by most peers and industry insiders as the best all-around poker player in the world. Fittingly, he won the WSOP's first mega-buy-in event with multiple games, defeating the world's top players. Following his passing in 2007, the "Chip Reese Memorial Trophy" was created and presented to those who followed his triumph.

The previous winners of this event were as follows:

David "Gunslinger" Bach (2009)
Scotty "the Prince" Nguyen (2008)
Kassem "Freddy" Deeb (2007)
David "Chip" Reese (2006)

This event has traditionally been held midway through the WSOP schedule. However, it was placed at the front of the schedule this year, due in part to ESPN's interest in filming the tournament. ESPN has televised this tournament four of the five years it has been played, with 2009 as the only "dark" year.

Although there are only five winners to date, no event champion has ever repeated.

Tournament Play

The tournament was played over five consecutive days, from May 28th through June 1st, 2010. Actually, the tournament ended on July 2nd, which would make it a six-day tournament.

The tournament was played over Memorial Day weekend.

The \$50,000 buy-in Poker Players Championship was a mixed game competition. The mix of eight games included:

Triple-Draw Deuce-to-Seven Lowball
Limit Hold'em
Omaha High-Low Split/Eight-or-Better
Razz
Seven-Card Stud
Seven Card Stud Split/Eight-or-Better
Pot-Limit Omaha
No-Limit Hold'em

Competitors played each game for one full rotation of each game. The order of games was determined by a random draw at the start of play on each day.

Once the final table was reached, the format became all No-Limit Hold'em. This was similar to the way the first H.O.R.S.E. championship was played in 2006. The adjustment was made primarily to attract television coverage from ESPN. Interest in the last mixed-game tournament (2008 H.O.R.S.E.) with limit games played at the final table indicated some viewers have limited interest in games other than No-Limit Hold'em. Hence, the compromise was reached to keep the mixed games during most of the tournament and then switch to No-Limit Hold'em at the final table.

Attendance for this tournament increased by 22 percent from last year's number, when there were 95 entries. This year's event attracted 116 entries.

The prize pool exploded by more than \$1 million over last year's figure. The total prize pool amounted to \$5,568,000, a significant increase from last year's \$4,560,000.

The defending champion from 2009 was David "Gunslinger" Bach, from Athens, GA. He entered this year's tournament but did not cash. Bach was never a serious factor in this year's competition. He was eliminated in the middle of the pack on Day Two of the five-day tournament.

116 to 110: Day One knocked out just six players of the initial field of 116. The chip leader at the end of Day One was Erik Sagstrom (did not cash).

This was a brutally tough field. The toughest Day One starting table was undoubtedly a group which included: David Benyamine, Chau Giang, Phil Ivey, Yuval Bronshtein, Ted Lawson, Scotty Nguyen, Pat Pezzin, and Freddy Deeb. Six were former gold bracelet winners and two were former event champions.

Three-time gold bracelet winner "Miami" John Cernuto had a contrarian opinion on the overall talent of the field. Cernuto, who focuses on split-pot games and is widely acknowledged as one of the game's top Omaha specialists, stated few players are able to play all the games well. He stated the boom in Hold'em tends to attract many players to mixed events who do not play the other games particularly well. Since the eight-game mix requires a mastery of many different forms of poker, the best Hold'em players are neutralized somewhat by the nuances of multiple games.

110 to 54: Day Two knocked out another 56 players. The chip leader at the end of Day Two was Kirk Morrison (did not cash).

54 to 21: Day Three knocked out 33 players. The chip leader at the end of Day Three was Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi (he finished first).

21 to 8: Day Four knocked out 13 players. The chip leader at the end of Day Four and start of the final table was Robert Mizrachi. He ended up finishing fifth.

When heads-up play began, Michael Mizrachi held about a 3 to 2 chip lead over Vladimir Schmelev. The duel lasted about three hours.

The final hand of the tournament came when Mizrachi found himself in the dog role with Qs 5c versus Vladimir Schmelev, holding Qd 8s. Mizrachi moved all in pre-flop and Schmelev called. The final board showed 9h 6h 4c 5h 4d giving Mizrachi a pair of fives and the victory.

At the end of the tournament, the WSOP began a new tradition whereby the previous winner (David Bach) handed off the Chip Reese Memorial Trophy to the new champion (Mizrachi). The inspiration for the new tradition for the Poker Players Championship came from The Masters championship in golf, where the previous winner bestows a green jacket upon the new champion each year.

The Chip Reese Memorial Trophy reads: "Standing the Test of Time."

The tournament officially began on Friday, May 28th at 5:20 pm. The tournament officially ended on Tuesday, June 2nd, at 3:56 am. The entire duration of actual playing time amounted to 58.5 hours.

2010 WSOP Statistics

Through the conclusion of Event #2, the 2010 WSOP has attracted 837 total entries; \$5,892,450 in prize money has been awarded to winners thus far.

Through the conclusion of Event #2, the nationalities of winners have been:

United States (2)

Through the conclusion of Event #2, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:

Vietnam (1)

United States (1)

-- Official Report by Nolan Dalla

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.

For official news and the latest updates from the 2010 World Series of Poker, visit: www.wsop.com

For statistics and historical information from the 2010 World Series of Poker, contact Nolan Dalla at: nolandalla@aol.com or nolandalla@gmail.com

For official photographs from the 2010 World Series of Poker, visit: www.wsopphotos.com

For specific media photo requests, email dcurlley@hillmanpr.com and list "Urgent Media Request" as the subject line.

Note: All photos must be credited as follows: Photographer's Name/WSOP

The 2010 World Series of Poker's title sponsor is Jack Link's Beef Jerky. For more information, visit: www.jacklinks.com