



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

Official Report  
Event #25  
Omaha High-Low Split Championship  
Buy-In: \$10,000  
Number of Entries: 212  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,992,800  
Number of Places Paid: 27  
First Place Prize: \$488,241  
June 12-14, 2010

## TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

Play it Again, Sam

Sammy Farha Wins WSOP Omaha High-Low Championship

Debonair High-Stakes Poker Pro Knocks Out James Dempsey in Heads-Up Play

Farha Wins Third WSOP Gold Bracelet – and Second Omaha High-Low Title

High-Stakes Poker Icon Collects \$488,241 in Prize Money

Farha Finally Buries James Dempsey in Five-Hour Test of Stamina

## OVERVIEW

There is no one in the poker world quite like Sammy Farha. Dashing and debonair, Farha is part James Bond, part Humphrey Bogart, part Hugh Hefner -- all wrapped up into a five-foot-nine dynamo of a man with an unrelenting passion for fast living and high-stakes gambling.

Farha initially burst upon the poker scene a decade ago when he won a gold bracelet in the Pot-Limit Omaha championship at the 1996 World Series of Poker. But it wasn't until his alluring television appearance on ESPN in the 2003 Main Event championship that Sammy Farha became a household name. Indeed, if the World Series was all about style, then Farha would have been its grand champion a long time ago. Farha blitzed through 837 players that fateful year. All that stood in the way of Farha and a \$2.5 million cash prize was a previously-unknown

accountant from Tennessee named Chris Moneymaker.

What happened at that final table seven long years ago is no mystery. Moneymaker won. But in many ways, Farha won also. Love him or hate him, Farha became a bona fide poker celebrity.

Farha has played in many poker tournaments and high-limit cash games since, with mixed results. Six-figure money swings are not only common, but a daily occurrence whenever Farha chooses to take a seat in any game. The Lebanese-born self-made multi-millionaire is an instant attraction at any table, which is why he is perhaps television's favorite poker face.

In one of the tougher fields in poker history, 212 players -- the vast majority of them top-notch tournament players and high-limit cash-game specialists -- entered the \$10,000 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split championship at the 2010 World Series of Poker. After two long days, 203 players had been eliminated and the final table was set.

Farha's competition was formidable. The biggest menace was British bad boy James Dempsey, who won his first WSOP gold bracelet just two weeks ago. Two other former gold bracelet winners graced the felt -- Michael Chow and Abe Mosseri. Indeed, Farha later said, there were no weak players in this tournament.

Farha ultimately triumphed in a brutal finale that was just as much a test of mental stamina as it was poker skill. The win proved to be one of his most satisfying victories. The final table lasted nearly 13 seemingly endless see-saw hours, including five nerve-racking hours between Farha and James Dempsey, who ultimately went down in a gallant, yet emotionally-shattering defeat.

Farha may be Lebanese by birth -- but he is unquestionably an American success story. Farha left his birthplace of Beirut and arrived in the United States in 1978 to attend college. He graduated from the University of Kansas. Farha was a successful pool player before becoming a full-time poker pro. In fact, he has played just about every kind of game for big money, including video games, pinball, and backgammon. But poker has proven to be Farha's game, and he is now indelibly linked to those who have mastered it.

Given Farha's enigmatic character, it is impossible to measure the true impact or meaning of a third WSOP victory. On one hand, Farha was overjoyed to win his first gold bracelet in four years. On the other hand, the prize money he received -- the mere pittance of \$488,241 -- is roughly equal to the typical buy-in at Farha's regular poker game.

That makes this World Series of Poker victory but a pit stop in the fast-lane that is Farha's life.

## THE CHAMPION – SAMMY FARHA

The \$10,000 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split champion (Event #25) is Sammy Farha, from Houston, TX.

Farha is 51-years-old. He was born in Beirut, Lebanon.

Farha came to the United States in 1976, during early phases of the Lebanese Civil War. He arrived in the U.S. to pursue his college education. Farha graduated from the University of Kansas in 1981 with an undergraduate degree in Business Administration.

After college, Farha moved to Houston, TX. He worked several odd jobs around Houston. During the late 1980s, Farha discovered the underground poker scene and began playing poker in various homes and private clubs. Farha gradually developed a passion for the game and began playing full-time in 1990.

Farha's first recorded tournament cash took place at the 1996 WSOP. He won a gold bracelet the first year he played, which was awarded in Pot-Limit Omaha.

Farha has been playing in many of the highest-limit cash games in the world over the past 10 years. He still prefers playing in cash games over tournaments.

Farha is a fixture on popular poker shows, including "High Stakes Poker."

According to official records, Farha now has three wins, six final table appearances, and eight in-the-money finishes at the WSOP. His career WSOP earnings now total \$2,508,396.

Farha won this event in 2006. He did not enter the tournament in 2007, 2008, or 2009. Hence, his victory in 2010 marks something of a back-to-back victory.

Farha is the author of "Farha on Omaha," a poker strategy book.

Farha has a line of clothing and poker accessories, which can be viewed and purchased at his website: <http://www.samfarha.com/>

Farha made a cameo appearance in the 2007 film, "Lucky You," which is about poker.

## WINNER QUOTES

On what winning his first WSOP gold bracelet means: "This is very special, of course. Anytime you can beat a tough field, it's special."

On winning the same event twice: "In a way, it's like I won it two years in a row. I did not play this event in 2007, 08, or 09."

On his place in poker history: "I'm not competing for the most bracelets. If I did that, I would play every single event. I play the events I like. I am not trying to compete for 10 bracelets, or whatever. There are certain pros who play every single event. They compete for the most bracelets. I do not do that."

On being one of the best Omaha High-Low Split players in the world: "I think so. I think I can play the game."

On other great Omaha High-Low Split players he respects: "There are a lot of great players. The whole field is amazing. Every year, I think this is the toughest field in the entire WSOP. It is 212 players and they are all good players."

On his table demeanor: "I love the game. I enjoy the game. This is my hobby. This is my business. This is everything, you know. I enjoy it and that's why I do it. You have to enjoy the game to be good at it."

On the five-hour heads-up struggle against James Dempsey: "I was never frustrated. And normally, I do get frustrated. I did not get a good night's sleep last night. I was a little bit frustrated because the audience was so loud. They were out of line a bit, but it was fun. It was fun in the beginning, but after a while you get tired. But it never bothered me."

On high-stakes cash games versus tournaments: "I do not like tournaments too much. It takes a lot of time. You have to play a lot of them, or don't do it. I pick my own tournaments. Like I said, I am not competing to win the most bracelets. I could win a lot more if I played. But I am happy."

On what goes through his mind when he sees himself playing poker on television: "I laugh at myself. I'm always the star."

## THE FINAL TABLE

The final table consisted of four former WSOP gold bracelet winners: James Dempsey, Michael Chow, Abe Mosseri, and Sammy Farha.

Two of the finalists – James Dempsey and Michael Chow – were competing for their second WSOP victories this year.

Four different nations were represented at the final table -- Great Britain, The Netherlands, Russia, and the United States.

The final table began nine-handed.

Final table participants ranged in age from 27 to 51.

The runner-up was James Dempsey, from Brighton, UK. He just missed what would have been a second career WSOP gold bracelet victory. Dempsey won the \$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Hold'em tournament (Event #9) nine days earlier. Dempsey is one of England's top online poker pros. Dempsey's consolation prize amounted to \$301,789.

So far this year, English poker players are enjoying quite a strong WSOP. Dempsey nearly won the fourth gold bracelet for the UK this year, following his earlier win as well as victories by Praz Banshi and Richard Ashby.

The third-place finisher was Yueqi "Rich" Zhu, an engineer from Rowland Heights, CA. Despite being the only non-pro at the table, he now has nearly two dozen in-the-money finishes at the WSOP, dating back to 1999. This was his fourth final table appearance, but he came up short and had to settle for \$225,325 as the third-place prize.

The fourth-place finisher was Sergey Altbregin, from St. Petersburg, Russia. This was his third time to cash at this year's WSOP, worth a nice payout totaling \$169,368. The poker pro initially made a grand entrance onto the WSOP scene last year, when he finished second in the \$2,500 buy-in Mixed Event.

The fifth-place finisher was Tony Merksick, from Council Bluffs, IA. This marked his first time to cash at the WSOP, following two cashes on the WSOP Circuit at his hometown tournament at Horseshoe Council Bluffs a few years ago. Merksick collected his biggest poker paycheck ever, amounting to \$128,097.

The sixth-place finisher was Michael Chow, from Honolulu, HI. He won his first gold bracelet in the \$1,500 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split tournament, held two weeks ago. Chow has now cashed three times at this year's WSOP. Sixth place paid \$97,507.

The seventh-place finisher was Eugene Katchalov, from New York, NY. He is a former trader-turned poker pro who has cashed big in several poker tournaments, including the WSOP. This was his 15<sup>th</sup> time to cash at the WSOP. He had six cashes last year, and five cashes in 2008. But this was his first time to cash this year, which paid \$74,670.

The eighth-place finisher was Abe Mosseri, from Longboat Key, FL. The former New York City high-stakes backgammon and gin player won last year's \$2,500 buy-in Deuce-to-Seven Triple-Draw Lowball event. This marked his fifth time to cash at the WSOP, which paid

\$57,552.

The ninth-place finisher was Steve Wong, a poker pro from Haarlem, The Netherlands. This marked his third final table appearance at the WSOP. He now has nearly \$300,000 in career earnings at the WSOP. Wong collected \$44,618.

The final table officially began at 6:30 pm and ended at 6:50 am. The final table clocked in at 12 hours, 20 minutes. This was one of the longest Omaha High-Low finales in WSOP history.

## OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top 27 finishers collected prize money. Aside from the four who made the final table, other former WSOP gold bracelet finishers who cashed in this event included – Mike Sexton (10<sup>th</sup>), Eric Baldwin (11<sup>th</sup>), David Baker (15<sup>th</sup>), Steve Zolotow (16<sup>th</sup>), “Miami” John Cernuto (22<sup>nd</sup>), Jeffrey Lisandro (24<sup>th</sup>), Huck Seed (25<sup>th</sup>), and Dan Heimiller (27<sup>th</sup>).

Mike Sexton now has 47 career cashes at the WSOP. This moves him into a 13<sup>th</sup>-place on the all-time list.

“Miami” John Cernuto now has 48 career cashes at the WSOP. This moves him to 12<sup>th</sup>-place in the all-time list.

Steve Zolotow now has 40 career cashes at the WSOP. This moves him into 24<sup>th</sup>-place on the all-time list.

Dan Heimiller cashed for the fourth time this year.

The defending champion was Daniel Alaei, from Los Angeles, CA. He entered this year’s tournament but did not cash.

## ODDS AND ENDS

This is the 853<sup>rd</sup> gold bracelet event in World Series of Poker history.

Note: This figure includes every official WSOP event played since 1970, including tournaments during the early years when there were no actual gold bracelets awarded. It also includes 11 gold bracelets awarded at WSOP Europe (2007-2009).

The final table was played on the ESPN Main Stage.

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 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 are permitted by both public and members of the media.

Farha requested that the national anthem of Lebanon be played at his WSOP gold bracelet ceremony. This will be the first time the Lebanese anthem has been played.

## EVENT HISTORY

This was the second-largest Omaha High-Low Split prize pool in poker history. In fact, only four previous events had ever surpassed the million-dollar mark. Here are the biggest Omaha High-Low Split prize pools in poker history:

2008 WSOP -- \$2,209,000 (\$10,000 buy-in)  
2010 WSOP -- \$1,992,800 (\$10,000 buy-in)  
2009 WSOP -- \$1,682,600 (\$10,000 buy-in)  
2007 WSOP -- \$1,316,000 (\$5,000 buy-in)  
2006 WSOP -- \$1,245,000 (\$5,000 buy-in)

In 1983, the first Omaha-High tournament was introduced at the WSOP. The first Omaha High-Low Split tournament was played in 1990. During the 1990s, the WSOP schedule included Limit Omaha-High and Pot-Limit Omaha events. Limit Omaha-High has gradually faded in popularity since, and the game was removed from the WSOP schedule after 2003, while Omaha High-Low Split continues to generate a steady following.

Here are the attendance figures for the last three Omaha High-Low championship events, since the buy-in was raised to \$10,000. Prior to 2008, the highest buy-in Omaha High-Low tournament was \$5,000:

2010 – 212 entries  
2009 – 179 entries  
2008 – 235 entries

Only five players in WSOP history have won two gold bracelets in Omaha High-Low Split. They are Thang Luu, Scott Clements, Scotty Nguyen, Chris “Jesus” Ferguson – and with this victory, Sammy Farha.

Brent Carter and Berry Johnston are currently tied for the lead in the “Most Omaha Cashes” category in WSOP history – with 20.

## TOURNAMENT PLAY

The tournament was played over four consecutive days, from June 12-15, 2010. The fourth day was unscheduled. But the final table ran so long, it ended at 6:50 am.

The heads-up match between Farha and Dempsey lasted more than five hours, one of the longest Omaha High-Low Split duels in poker history.

The final hand of the tournament came when Farha was dealt Jc 9h 7d 4h against Dempsey’s Jh 8d 6c 5c. The final board showed Td 4s 3s Th Tc, which gave Farha one of the most anti-climatic poker hands of his career, as the Jc 9h played and best Dempsey’s Jh 8d.

## 2010 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of Event #25 (sans 24), the nationalities of winners have been:

United States (16)  
Great Britain (3)  
Canada (2)

Hungary (1)  
New Zealand (1)  
France (1)

Through the conclusion of Event #25 (sans 24), the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:

United States (11)  
Great Britain (3)  
Vietnam (2)  
Canada (2)  
China (2)  
Hungary (1)  
New Zealand (1)  
France (1)  
Lebanon (1)

Through the conclusion of Event #25 (sans 24), the ratio of professional poker players to semi-pros and amateurs who won gold bracelets is as follows:

Professional Players (17): Michael Chow, Michael Mizrachi, Praz Bansi, Josh Tieman, Peter Gelencser, James Dempsey, Men "the Master" Nguyen, Matt Matros, Yan R. Chen, Steve Gee, Carter Phillips, Jason DeWit, Eric Buchman, David Baker, Richard Ashby, Dutch Boyd, Sammy Farha

Semi-Pros (2): Frank Kassela, Tex Barch

Amateurs (5): Duc Pham, Aadam Daya, Pascal Lefrancois, Simon Watt, Vanessa Hellebuyck

Through the conclusion of Event #25 (sans 24), here is the list of repeat WSOP gold bracelet winners at the 2010 WSOP:

Praz Bansi  
Men "the Master" Nguyen  
Russ "Dutch" Boyd  
Sammy Farha

-- 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](http://www.wsop.com). Thank you.*

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*For official news and the latest updates from the 2010 World Series of Poker, visit: [www.wsop.com](http://www.wsop.com)*

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

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