



**2012 World Series of Poker Presented by Jack Link's Beef Jerky
Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada**

**Official Report
Event #55
The Big One for One Drop
No-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In: \$1,000,000
Number of Entries: 48
Total Net Prize Pool: \$42,666,672
Number of Places Paid: 9
First Place Prize: \$18,346,673
July 1 - 3, 2012**

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

SIMPLY MAGICAL: MAGICIAN ANTONIO ESFANDIARI WINS BIG ONE FOR ONE DROP

CLAIMS RECORD \$18,346,673 PRIZE IN POKER'S MOST MAJESTIC MOMENT

THE RICHEST DAY IN POKER HISTORY

TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

July 3, 2012 will go down as the richest day in poker history.

No time, no day, no event ever in the history of the game awarded more cash. And yet -- crazy as it may sound -- money was perhaps the second or even third most memorable story of the day. But let's start with the money, anyway.

Eighteen-million, three-hundred forty-six thousand, six-hundred and seventy-three dollars. For those with short attention spans and want to cut and paste that to Twitter -- that's \$18,346,673 for short.

Oh, and that's just the prize for one player. The second-place finisher really got shafted. He only received \$10,112,001. Then, there was third-place, which paid \$4,352,000. Fourth-place got less, and fifth received even less. You get the picture.*

In all, the top nine finishers collected the astronomical sum of \$42,666,672. To put that into context, the 2012 WSOP awarded more prize money in a single day than any other live poker tournament held in history for its entire duration.*

So, what could possibly top that as a news story?

Well, two things (maybe). But first, let's take a look at a poker tournament like no other. Ever.

PURE MAGIC

Winning a WSOP gold bracelet is always a special moment. It's often cited as the highlight of any poker career. It's usually the greatest achievement many will make in their lives.

But this tournament was different. Very different.

Winning the one-of-a-kind tournament, which was completed on a Tuesday night at the Rio in Las Vegas in front of a packed gallery of spectators, as well as a worldwide television viewing audience on ESPN and the live stream at WSOP.com, was not just the crowning jewel of an eclectic 10-year poker career. It was the culmination of mind over matter, and willpower over distraction.

First, let's talk about how spectacular this moment was in terms of pure human drama. Antonio "The Magician" Esfandiari -- yes, a former magician -- won the richest prize in poker history. He collected a bank-account busting \$18,346,673.

Esfandiari used to be a professional magician. In fact, he once performed magic tricks and wowed audiences of all ages. But his greatest performance might have been on this night, as Esfandiari reached deep into his bag of card tricks in what was innocently labeled on the official WSOP schedule as "Event #55." It wasn't so amazing that Esfandiari won. What was amazing was the drama surrounding his second career bracelet victory. To call it "magical" would be a gross understatement (Note: This special bracelet is actually made of platinum, but it counts among WSOP gold bracelet achievements).

Esfandiari topped a field of 48 millionaires -- 28 of them fellow poker players -- including the game's premier talent. He also conquered an unprecedented collection of financial minds, including billionaires accustomed to eating their adversaries for breakfast. Anybody who thought there was dead money in this field or that the competition was soft would be incorrect. Billionaires do not get to be billionaires by doing nothing. Consider that nine of the first 11 players to bust out were professional poker players.

Indeed, this was a match for the ages -- pitting the most successful business executives, investors, and philanthropists from all over the world -- countries like the United States, Russia, China, Germany, Italy, France, Canada, Great Britain -- who came together for a duel cause. The first objective was to compete in an event of historical proportions. The second was to give something back in the form of a charitable component. More on the charity to come.

The tournament was played over three consecutive days. It started out with 48 players, who each posted an unheard of one-million dollar entry fee, just to sit at the table. After one day's action, 37 survived. By the end of the second day, the No-Limit Hold'em tournament was down to just eight.

One of those eight finalists was a 33-year-old professional poker player now residing in Las Vegas. No doubt, Esfandiari is a beloved figure in the game of poker -- and if there's any doubt about that, all you had to do was open your eyes and ears and take in the cheers at the Big One for One Drop finale table, played on Tuesday afternoon. He's done perhaps as much if not more than anyone in the game in terms of giving -- of himself, his time, and so often his money. Perhaps that's why Esfandiari's cheering rail was the largest, aside from the sentimental crowd favorite -- the organizer of this event, founder and CEO of Cirque du Soleil, Guy Laliberté, who fittingly got dealt into the final table of the event he envisioned.

This final table had just about everything any poker fan would want in a lineup of this monetary and historic proportion. Four highly-respected poker pros, including the WSOP's all-time leader in just about every statistical category, facing four powerhouse minds from the world of business and entertainment.

But this poker tournament morphed from a metaphorical battle between megaminds in poker and high finance into a magic act. One by one, the Magician's opponents disappeared in the following order:

Eighth Place -- Richard Yong, 54-year-old poker player and businessman who spends much of his time in Malaysia, Macau, and China. He's also a philanthropist who is one of the most revered gamblers in Asia.

Seventh Place -- Bobby "The Owl" Baldwin, the 1978 World Champion who owns four WSOP gold bracelets. He's a member of the Poker Hall of Fame. Baldwin helped to build City Center, the most expensive development in Las Vegas history.

Sixth Place -- Brian Rast, the two-time WSOP gold bracelet winner from Las Vegas who hoped to add to his list of prestigious titles -- including last year's Poker Players Championship.

Fifth Place -- Guy Laliberté, the self-made entertainment genius who created famed Cirque du Soleil, took a seat in the extraordinary event he inspired. There was something poignantly ironic when Laliberté took "Seat One" at the Big One for One Drop. It was the perfect script.

Fourth Place -- Phil Hellmuth, the most storied poker player in WSOP history, who won his 12th gold bracelet earlier at this year's WSOP. He holds virtually every record in the book, including the 1989 World Championship. Hellmuth, at age 47, lives in Palo Alto, CA and is a member of the Poker Hall of Fame. This was his biggest cash prize ever -- amounting to \$2,645,333.

Third Place -- David Einhorn, the hedge-fund investor and financial mogul from Westchester County, NY had been on a similar stage before, finishing 18th place in the 2006 Main Event Championship, which was the biggest poker tournament of all time. At the time, Einhorn donated all of his \$600,000 in winnings to the Micheal J. Fox Foundation. Incredibly, he did the same thing again, forking over his entire prize totaling \$4,352,000 to City Year, a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to keep kids in school and on track to graduate high school.

Second Place -- Sam Trickett, the 26-year-old English poker pro, one of the highest-stakes gamblers in the world, is arguably the king of the British poker scene. Trickett was seeking his first WSOP gold bracelet but had to instead settle for the biggest consolation prize in poker history -- \$10,112,001.

First Place -- The Big One for One Drop Champion, Antonio "the Magician" Esfandiari

All triumphs actually begin long before champions enter the arena, and Esfandiari is no exception. The magic man has endured a roller coaster of emotional and financial ups and downs since he burst upon the poker scene eight years ago, when he won his first WSOP gold bracelet in the Pot-Limit Hold'em event at the old Binion's Horseshoe.

Since 2004, Esfandiari has become just as popular for his legendary rock-star lifestyle as he has for his poker accomplishments. Perpetually the first one to every party and the last one to leave (assuming he didn't throw the party himself), the "life of the party" is and always has been Antonio. In most cases, these types of stories end badly. Too much of this. Too much of that. Too much of too much. Too much excess.

However, in Esfandiari's case, he was always able to keep at least one eye on the right road and a steady hand on the steering wheel on a highway that passed straight through Las Vegas and then takes an off ramp to a fall and in some cases, tragedy.

Esfandiari never lost his way. He never lost his vision. His passion. His love for life and living it to the fullest.

When asked what may have been the personal tipping point that allowed him to rise above the most stunning collection of financial barons ever assembled for a poker game, Esfandiari was quick to speak of his life coach -- Robyn Williams, the founder and CEO of the Choice Center in Las Vegas.

Esfandiari firmly believes that living a successful life is about making the right choices -- about everything. About diet. About exercise. About lifestyle. About finance. About friends. It's all about choice -- and Esfandiari certainly has been making a lot of the right ones, lately.

Esfandiari also gave credit to his father, who was born in Iran and immigrated to the United States. For the first time, Mr. Esfandiari was there to proudly witness his son at his happiest moment.

As soon as Esfandiari won the final pot of the tournament, he was overtaken with emotion as he embraced his father. Esfandiari's brother joined the richest hug in poker history. The sight of three very close people on the stage, beaming in the spotlight, with tears in their eyes, in front of the world's television cameras and the watchful eye of every poker player in the universe was about as special as it gets.

Call it what you want -- premonition, magic, luck or skill. Antonio "The Magician" Esfandiari is the new \$18 million man who will be remembered -- at least for now -- as the biggest winner in poker history.

Here are the final official results from the Big One for One Drop:

1st: Antonio Esfandiari - \$18,346,673
2nd: Sam Trickett - \$10,112,001
3rd: David Einhorn- \$4,352,000
4th: Phil Hellmuth - \$2,645,333
5th: Guy Laliberte - \$1,834,666
6th: Brian Rast - \$1,621,333
7th: Bobby Baldwin - \$1,408,000
8th: Richard Yong - \$1,237,333

WAIT -- THERE'S MORE!

That still leaves one other possible storyline that might take precedent over the prize money -- which is really saying something.

And what would that possibly be?

To answer that question we must depart on an imaginary journey away from the Las Vegas Strip and transport our attention to places where there are no poker tables, no glitz, and glamour - and sometimes no hope.

Places like impoverished villages. Barren deserts. Refugee camps. Places where there is horrific famine. Where there is pain. Where people suffer and die.

No doubt, Esfandiari would be the first to insist that this victory was not just about him. There was more than one winner. Many, many more.

Long after this astronomical amount of money is come and gone, long after the television show is but a distant memory in the minds of millions who watched and witnessed it, and long after this gold bracelet victory is vaulted and padlocked into the record books, many thousands of people are going to benefit from the financial windfall of what happened on this historic night in Las Vegas.

They aren't interested in bundles of cash. They have no interest in the meaning of winning a WSOP bracelet. All they want and need is one thing.

Clean water.

That's right, clean water.

Consider that every 20 seconds, somewhere in the world, a child dies from a water-related disease. That's intolerable. Due to this tournament and one man who cares, many good people that none of us know, nor will ever meet, will be given access to one of life's most precious resources. Clean water.

Guy Laliberté's grand vision of holding an unprecedented historical event, in unison with Mitch Garber's enthusiastic support on behalf of Caesars Interactive Entertainment and the World Series of Poker will put clean water into the mouths of people for the first time, which with continued financial support and greater awareness will hopefully last forever.*

More than \$10 million was raised by holding a tournament and playing a game. That's right -- a poker game.

Change does not happen overnight. It happens one step at a time. And poker players have helped others to take one big step forward, thanks to this event.

Indeed, Antonio may be the Big One for One Drop champion and \$18 million richer. But the biggest winners of all are people whose names will probably remain unknown.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE CHAMPION -- ANTONIO ESFANDIARI

Question: Antonio, you walked off this stage about a week and a half ago in a very disappointing third place. You were crushed. At that time, could you have possibly thought you'd get to this moment.

Esfandiari: Yes. I believed it. I declared it. I wanted to win even more since I took third and didn't win that tournament. I got pretty unlucky when it was three-handed, and so I was determined to come back and win another one.

Question: On a scale of Antonio Esfandiari's greatness, how great is this?

Esfandiari: It's like 182, feels like. It's better than sex that's for sure.

Question: Talk about the last hand when you're sweating the last two cards – the flush draw. How hard was your heart beating?

Esfandiari: It wasn't beating that hard actually. I just went through the process and I was thinking: Okay here we are. This is the moment. If you fade this flush draw, you win the biggest tournament in history of the world. And that's it. This is the moment. It's here, right now. I was like please Jesus, this one time. And I'm pretty sure I used up all my one-times on this tournament, but I'm okay with that. I said earlier if I use my one-times for the next five years in this tournament, I'm happy with that. So, from now on, it's one more time.

Question: How does your approach change when you're playing against...

Esfandiari: I feel like the President! I like this!

Question: How does your approach change when you're playing against people for whom, over a million dollars isn't a lot of money at all?

Esfandiari: Honestly, it didn't change. It's really just a poker tournament. You get two cards, your opponent gets two cards. So, you just have to play the chip stack, the position, and the player. And, you know, it really didn't make a difference. I just wanted to win the tournament.

Question: Talk to us a little bit about growing up. You were doing a lot of partying about half a decade ago and....

Esfandiari: Who says I've grown up?

Question: I think you've grown up a little bit. I think you matured a little. I think you were doing a lot more partying and not focusing that much on your poker game. I think that you've matured. Am I right?

Esfandiari: Absolutely. I did some self-awareness work, and just kind of took things into perspective; you know, what was and what wasn't important. And going out and partying at the end of the day, it really didn't make me that happy. I loved it, don't get me wrong. I kind of grew out of it. I'm 33 now and so I just decided to live a better life, and this World Series I decided I was going to wake up every day and go to the gym and just be disciplined and win a bracelet.

Question: Do you think that stuff has resulted in winning the bracelet? Is it because you had that more disciplined life?

Esfandiari: I mean it's just one-hundred percent. It's not even close. I have to thank Corrine June. She's been coaching me the whole tournament. Where's Corrine? Right there, she's been coaching me the whole tournament, every single day before the tournament, every single break. So if you guys want to interview her, I'd interview her too. She's amazing.

Question: When was the first time you actually visualized yourself winning this bracelet?

Esfandiari: This one in particular? Honestly, I've been visualizing it the whole time. But I've been visualizing that for every tournament I've done in this World Series. So this time it just came true. I really saw it last night at the final table. I just felt it. I just knew it was my time.

Question: Was this your tournament from the get-go? It seemed like you were really relaxed. You were playing with Bill Perkins. Running around, calling out people, calling out David Einhorn for giving to charity. You seemed comfortable more than anybody else in this field. Is that fair to say?

Esfandiari: I mean, I think so. I think some people were comfortable. They were just weren't as outgoing. You know, my style is to talk and have a good time at the poker table, I might as well enjoy my life, instead of sitting there and being bored. Because pokers, as we all know is boring sometimes. So, I was just trying to have a good time, and I would do that any hand, any tournament, anywhere. The fact that it was the One Drop made no difference.

Question: How do you feel this tournament has changed your life, Antonio?

Esfandiari: I came on the poker circuit many years ago, and I've had some success. And then for many years I really didn't care I didn't win anything. But thanks to other shows I was still in the poker scene, but I won a WPT a few years ago and that felt great, but I think this kind of just really lays down the foundation that Antonio Esfandiari is a poker player.

Question: Where do you go from here?

Esfandiari: Where do I go from here? To the bar?

Question: Did you think about that 18 million dollar payout?

Esfandiari: I swear to you, believe it or not, I never once thought about the money. I just wanted to win.

Question: Filming at the end, you gave your dad the bracelet. What did that mean to you? When did you decide you were going to do that?

Esfandiari: I said it last night, I told my little brother that "this one's for dad." And I'm giving him the bracelet. My dad has been my biggest supporter. The very first time I invited him to a casino to watch me play he sat behind me and he watched my cards, and before poker was ever popular he was like, "Son, I support you a 100 percent." He was totally cool with it, which was surprising. At first he wasn't, but when he came down and watched me play and I told him what people had he was like, "Okay, I get it." And so he's been my biggest supporter. I love him to death. He's the greatest man on the planet. He gave up a lot to move us to this country, everything basically. To win this for him and give him the bracelet, means the world to me. So, I'm going to wear this tonight, but after tonight, it's my dad's bracelet.

Question: Antonio, is this more important than winning the Main Event for you?

Esfandiari: Well you know I had a conversation with somebody about that, and I don't know. I think it's like a history thing. This is unprecedented. If I could go and pick one tournament to win this year, this one or the Main Event, I'd almost pick this one. I don't know what it feels like to win the Main Event. After I win it this year, I'll let you know.

Question: Was it important to overcome Phil Hellmuth for the all-time money yesterday?

Esfandiari: No, but it was weird raising him with nine deuce.

Question: Do you have any charity of some sort to donate any money to?

Esfandiari: Sure, One Drop.

Question: Have you thought about how much?

Esfandiari: No, not yet.

Question: When did you decide to play in the One Drop?

Esfandiari: Just a few days before the tournament. I wasn't going to play, because I was going to do the commentary. But then I took third and I was like "Ugh!" And so I decided to play last minute.

Question: Are there some pretty happy investors out there right now?

Esfandiari: I plead the fifth.

* Note 1: Two other gold bracelet tournaments were completed on this day, as well. One had 3,166 players and paid out \$4.3 million (Event #53). The other attracted 3,221 entrants and paid out \$2.9 million (Event #54). That's nearly \$50 million won in a single day at the 2012 WSOP.

*Note 2: Mitch Garber, CEO of Caesars Interactive Entertainment, was not eligible to participate in this tournament. However, he personally donated \$111,111 to the One Drop fund, which is the same amount paid by each player in funds withheld for the charity.

2012 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of Event #55, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (43): Chip Saechao, Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Phil Hellmuth, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Brian Meinders, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Max Steinberg, Chris Tryba, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Dung "Gomer" Nguyen, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu, Joey Weissman, Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi, Steven Loube, Kenny Hsiung, Greg Hobson, Pete Vilandos, Yen Dang, Vanessa Selbst, Jim Willerson, Will Jaffe, Antonio Esfandiari

Canada (3): Ashkan Razavi, Simon Charette, Timothy Adams

France (1): Aubin Cazals

Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov

The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit

Belgium (1): Michael Gathy

Japan (1): Naoya Kihara

Great Britain (1): Craig McCorkell

Germany (1): Jan-Peter Jachtmann

Ukraine (1): Okelsii Kovalchuk

Italy (1): Rocco Palumbo

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:

United States (39): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Phil Hellmuth, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Brian Meinders, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Max Steinberg, Chris Tryba, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu, Joey Weissman, Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi, Steven Loube, Kenny Hsiung, Greg Hobson, Vanessa Selbst, Jim Willerson, Will Jaffe, Antonio Esfandiari

Canada (2): Simon Charette, Timothy Adams

Vietnam (2): Dung "Gomer" Nguyen, Yen Dang

Thailand (1): Chip Saechao

Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov

France (1): Aubin Cazals

Iran (1): Ashkan Razavi

The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit

Belgium (1): Michael Gathy

Japan (1): Naoya Kihara

Great Britain (1): Craig McCorkell

Germany (1): Jan-Peter Jachtmann

Ukraine (1): Okelsii Kovalchuk

Italy (1): Rocco Palumbo

Greece (1): Pete Vilandos

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of the 43 American winners has been:

Nevada (9): Brent Hanks, Andy Bloch, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Chris Tryba, Antonio Esfandiari

New York (7): Matt Matros, Andy Frankenger, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu, Joey Weissman, Vanessa Selbst, Will Jaffe

Texas (5): Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright, David "ODB" Baker, Pete Vilandos, Jim Willerson

California (4): Chip Saechao, John Monnette, Phil Hellmuth, Max Steinberg

Pennsylvania (3): Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Ben Scholl

Florida (3): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi

Ohio (2): Adam Friedman, Kenny Hsiung

Alabama (1): Herbert Tapscott

Washington (1): Brandon Schaefer

Maryland (1): Cliff Goldkind

New Jersey (1): Brian Meinders

Oklahoma (1): Gabe Scott

Kansas (1): Dung "Gomer" Nguyen

Massachusetts (1): Ronnie Bardah

Georgia (1): Steven Loube

Alaska (1): Greg Hobson

Colorado (1): Yen Dang

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the breakdown of professional poker players to semi-pros and amateurs who won gold bracelets is as follows:

Professional Players (41): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Andy Bloch, Aubin Cazals, John Monnette, Ashkan Razavi, Vincent van der Fluit, Brian Hastings, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenger, Phil Hellmuth, Randy Ohel, Michael Gathy, Simon Charette, Joe Cassidy, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz, Timothy Adams, Larry Wright,

Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Max Steinberg, Naoya Kihara, Chris Tryba, Craig McCorkell, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Greg Ostrander, Okelsii Kovalchuk, Henry Lu, Rocco Palumbo, Joey Weissman, Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi, Kenny Hsiung, Greg Hobson, Yen Dang, Vanessa Selbst, Will Jaffe, Antonio Esfandiari

Semi-Pros (6): Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov, Brian Meinders, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Jan-Peter Jachtman, Pete Vilandos

Amateurs (8): Chip Saechao, Herbert Tapscott, David "Doc" Arsht, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Dung "Gomer" Nguyen, Steven Loube, Jim Willerson

Note: Various categories and statistics will be updated with each gold bracelet event as they are completed.

-- 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: WSOP.com. Thank you.

For official news and the latest updates from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: WSOP.com

For statistics and historical information from the 2012 World Series of Poker, contact Nolan Dalla at: nolandalla@aol.com

For official media photographs from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: www.pokernews.photoshelter.com

For official spectator photographs from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: www.imagemasterspoker.com

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