



2011 World Series of Poker Presented by Jack Link's Beef Jerky
Caesars Palace
Las Vegas, Nevada

Official Report
Special Edition
WSOP Circuit National Championship
No-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In: By Invitation Only
Number of Entries: 97 (100 Qualified)
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,000,000
Number of Places Paid: 10
First Place Prize: \$300,000
May 27-29, 2011

HEADLINES

Sam Barnhart Wins 2011 WSOP Circuit National Championship

Tunica's WSOP Circuit Champion Earns First WSOP Gold Bracelet of 2011

Arkansas Semi-Pro Collects \$300,000 Top Prize

Was ESP a Factor in Barnhart's Victory?

Hugely-Successful WSOP Circuit Season Comes to a Thrilling Conclusion

WSOP Circuit's Seventh Season Sets Several Records

The Versus Network to Broadcast National Championship during Late Summer

OVERVIEW

Sam Barnhart was the winner of the first WSOP gold bracelet of 2011. He won his victory in the WSOP Circuit National Championship. This marked his first career WSOP gold bracelet.

Barnhart qualified for his seat by winning the WSOP Circuit Main Event Championship, held in Tunica (Mississippi) in February. He collected \$300,000 in prize money in what was his biggest career cash ever. This marked Barnhart's first time to cash at the WSOP in Las Vegas. He now has more than \$454,357 in career earnings in combined WSOP Circuit and WSOP events, all accomplished in within the past four months.

Barnhart is a 50-year-old software analyst and researcher from Little Rock, AR. He has worked at the Children's Medical Center and the Arkansas Department of Education. However, he is now

engaged in taking some time off to play poker and see how he does on the tournament circuit. Barnhart stated he would give himself one year to prove himself and measure his success.

Among the many things which are interesting about Barnhart was his unusual experience during the two tournaments he's won already this year. Barnhart stated that during those two events, he had a very unusual vision that he would win the tournament. When queried further about the futuristic fantasy, Barnhart revealed that he did not have the same inspiration during any of the other tournaments he has entered. He further revealed that he had his vision during the second day of both tournaments, when he had a below average stack.

Barnhart wanted to make it clear he believes purely in science, which is not surprising given his education and background as a researcher and problem solver. He generally dismisses extra-sensory perception as an explanation for unusual outcomes. However, he also could not shake the reality that he won both of the events where he experienced his vision.

The runner up was Jim Anderson, from Berea, OH. He received a nice consolation prize amounting to \$200,000.

The inaugural World Series of Poker Circuit National Championship was held at Caesars Palace Las Vegas. This was the first event of its kind. The National Championship was created by Caesars Entertainment -- which owns and operates the WSOP. Prior to the start of the season, a new points system and season-ending championship tournament was designed to reward players who had participated in a long series of poker tournaments held during the course of the 2010-2011 WSOP Circuit season. Only 100 players qualified to play in the special event.

The tournament's total prize pool amounted to \$1 million, with prize money going to the top ten finishers. The No-Limit Hold'em tournament will be featured on national television on June 30 at 9 PM ET. The broadcast will appear on The Versus Network.

Sam Barnhart becomes the first "WSOP Circuit National Champion" in history.

"I hope this is a beginning and not an end," Barnhart stated afterward.

THE CHAMPION – SAM BARNHART

The 2011 WSOP Circuit National Champion is Sam Barnhart, from Little Rock, AR.

Barnhart is a 50-year-old software analyst and researcher.

Barnhart is originally from Little Rock, AR. He began working as a young man and became a welder while in his 20s. Barnhart eventually decided he did not want to do that his entire life, so he decided to pursue a formal education. He earned an associate's degree in computer science, but later concluded he wanted to learn more. Barnhart returned to college again and earned a B.A. in biology from the University of Central Arkansas.

The University of Central Arkansas is known for having a very strong teaching program. Barnhart strongly considered going into teaching. He joined the university staff where he worked in the physics department for two years. Barnhart accumulated more credit hours and came to the point where he thought of himself as a professional student, since he spent so much time working at the university and taking classes.

A major career shift occurred for Barnhart when his two primary fields of study – biology and computer science began to merge. The new field suited to Barnhart became known as "informatics."

Barnhart became primarily engaged in research, including assisting with clinical trials. He worked on projects at the Children's Medical Center, in Little Rock. Barnhart also worked on various projects with the Arkansas Department of Education.

Barnhart is a serious reader of many subjects. He enjoys solving problems. Barnhart often spends his free time creating new software.

Barnhart's had been a recreational poker player up to the time he entered the WSOP Circuit Main Event Championship, held in Tunica on February 15, 2011. He won \$148,612 and a WSOP Circuit gold ring.

Barnhart was inspired by his Tunica victory and had enough confidence to begin taking poker more seriously and even consider it as a possible vocation. He decided to take one year off from working in order to play poker full-time. He has now been playing in both cash games and tournaments for the past four months.

Barnhart's "home" base for poker playing is in Tunica, MS which is about a three-hour drive from his home. He travels to Tunica often. Barnhart's favorite poker game is \$20-40 Limit Hold'em.

Barnhart collected \$300,000 for first place. He was presented with his first WSOP gold bracelet.

According to official records, Barnhart now has one win, one final table appearance, and one cash at the WSOP. His career WSOP earnings now total \$300,000.

Barnhart is to be classified as an amateur player at this time, since he has not been playing full-time more than a few months. However, given his recent results and success, his status could later change.

WINNER QUOTES

On how it feels to win the WSOP Circuit National Championship: "This is a wonderful feeling. It's one of the best feelings I have ever had in my life. To come here and win this is every poker players dream come true."

On what makes him a successful winning poker player, even though he does not have much experience playing at this level: "I did a lot of statistical work as part of my training and research. The math background really helped me. Later, I started reading "The Mathematics of Poker" and studying game theory. I am fascinated by analytical things. I think I am more comfortable with the subjects than many people given I have worked in this field for so long."

On the skills required in cash games versus tournaments: "I do not put as much math into tournament play, as cash games. I think tournament poker is much more about intuition and observation. There is math involved, of course. But in tournaments you have to use some intuition, also."

On his style in tournament poker, particularly when he's not running good: "I'm not going to get blinded off. I am going to play. I will push with 7-2 if I have to. But I am not going to sit there and get blinded off."

On taking a year off to play poker full time: "I decided I wanted to see what it would be like to spend an entire year playing poker. Winning in Tunica and finishing (fifth in another major tournament a few months ago) gave me enough revenue and bankroll to try and make it playing poker. I have a good resume, so I can always falls back on the research I have done. I know some poker players come into this completely empty-handed, but I want to be backed

up both with money and a career if this does not work out.

On experiencing visions he would win the tournament(s) on two occasions: “I’ve never said this before. But on the second day, when I was playing in Tunica, it just came upon me. I said I was going to win. I had this self-intuition that I was going to win it. I don’t know. It’s hard to explain. It was really strange. Then, yesterday afternoon I came in and I had the same feeling. These were the only two times I felt that way, and I had the feeling on the second day of both tournaments that I won....I like explanations. Everything can be explained. You just have to find it.”

More on trying to explain why he won the two tournaments when he felt he would win: “I am a scientist. I look at facts. I am a fact-person. I mean, I understand DNA analysis, so I am used to dealing with very complex issues. But this was something I simply can’t explain. Maybe there is a force out there, and people just need to tap into it. Maybe that’s what’s happened. Maybe this is my year. Everyone has their time. I hope this is a beginning, not an end.”

THE FINAL TABLE

The final table included no former WSOP gold bracelet winners.

Five of the nine players at the final table won gold rings on the WSOP Circuit this past season. One player, La Sengphet won two gold rings.

The final table began nine-handed.

The final table included players from two different nations – including Canada (1 player) and the United States (8 players).

The runner up was Jim Anderson, from Berea, OH. Anderson qualified to play by winning the Midwest Regional Championship, held last November at the Horseshoe Hammond, near Chicago. He collected more than half-a-million dollars for first place at the time. Anderson added another \$200,000 in prize money to his bankroll for second place.

The third-place finisher was Josh Evans, from Dallas, TX. Evans qualified by earning at at-large bid this year. This marked his eighth time to cash on the Circuit this season. He received \$135,000.

The fourth-place finisher was La Sengphet, from Dallas, TX. Sengphet won two WSOP Circuit gold rings this season, and had eight cashes in Circuit events. She earned \$100,000.

The fifth-place finisher was Jonathan Poche, from St. Martinsville, LA. Poche qualified by winning the Main Event Championship at Harrah’s New Orleans in mid-May, where he won his gold ring and \$121,000 in prize money. He received \$75,000 for finishing fifth.

The sixth-place finisher was Charles “Woody” Moore, Las Vegas, NV. He qualified by winning the Main Event at Southern Indiana. He won one WSOP Circuit gold ring and had 8 cashes this season. Moore collected \$55,000.

The seventh-place finisher was Drazen Ilich, from Lincoln, NE. Ilich qualified by earning at at-large bid this season. He won one WSOP Circuit gold ring and had five cashes this past year. Ilich earned \$42,500.

The eighth-place finisher was Adam Hui, from Markham, Ontario (Canada). Hui qualified by winning the Best All-Around player race at Caesars Palace, last month. This is his fourth WSOP Circuit cash this season. He pocketed \$35,000.

The ninth-place finisher was Matt Lawrence, from Tulsa, OK. Lawrence qualified by earning one of the 37 at-large bids this season. With this cash, he ended up with 11 in-the-money finishes this WSOP Circuit season – the most of any player. He was paid \$30,000.

The final table began at 12:40 pm and ended at 10:00 pm, meaning the duration lasted about nine hours and 20 minutes.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top ten finishers collected prize money.

There was no defending champion, since this was the first year of the WSOP Circuit National Championship.

Finishing in tenth place was Huy Nguyen, from Norman, OK who earned \$27,500 for just two days of poker playing.

The unfortunate “bubble” finisher was Doug “Rico” Carli, from Alliance, OH. Proving there is no justice in tournament poker, Carli has paid his dues on the WSOP Circuit more than any other player during the past seven seasons. Carli holds the record for most Circuit cashes in history, with 50. He barely qualified for a seat in the National Championship. But after surviving the first day, it seemed Carli might finally get the recognition he is due. Sadly, Carli ended up finishing just one spot out of the money in 11th place, just missing the guaranteed \$27,500 payout.

This was one of the few WSOP tournaments in history where not one single player who cashed was a former gold bracelet winner.

ODDS AND ENDS

This is the 893rd gold bracelet awarded 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 16 gold bracelets awarded to date at WSOP Europe (2007-2010).

The official WSOP gold bracelet ceremony normally 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. This ceremony will take place on Wednesday, June 2, 2011.

The winner Sam Barnhart requested that the national anthem of the United States be played at his WSOP gold bracelet ceremony, which will take place at the Rio three days following his victory.

Tournament results are to be included in the WSOP official records.

Tournament results are not to be included in the 2011 WSOP “Player of the Year” race.

The official motto of the WSOP Circuit has been, “First the gold ring, then the gold bracelet.” In the case of Sam Barnhart, the motto actually came true.

EVENT HISTORY

This is the seventh season of the WSOP Circuit, which began in 2005. There were only five stops that first year.

The WSOP Circuit has expanded each and every year since it began, both in terms of the number of events and attendance. This year, there were 154 gold ring tournaments. Each tour stop included ten gold ring events. Moreover, four venues included one additional tournament, which was a \$10,000 buy-in Regional Championship. All of the four Regional Championships (Midwest, East, West, and South), which took place in Chicago, Atlantic City, San Diego, and New Orleans respectively were taped for broadcast later on national television.

The 2010-2011 season began last August in Council Bluffs (Iowa). It concluded nine months later in New Orleans. There were a total of 15 WSOP Circuit stops. This created a wide array of National Championship qualifiers – including poker players of all ages and from different parts of the country, and even some non-American players. Hence, the tournament field was comprised of many amateur players as well as seasoned professionals and even a few former WSOP gold bracelet champions.

The casino selected to host the National Championship was Caesars Palace Las Vegas, which is accustomed to hosting high-profile poker events. Caesars Palace hosts several major tournaments every year, including the NBC Heads-Up National Championship, played every March.

Since this gold bracelet was awarded at Caesars Palace, this means that WSOP gold bracelets have been presented at only four different venues in the 42-year history of the WSOP – including Binion's Horseshoe (Las Vegas), The Rio (Las Vegas), Casino at the Empire (London), and Caesars Palace (Las Vegas).

The tournament was scheduled days prior to the start of the 2011 WSOP, taking place at the Rio. Consideration was given to players who would be able to travel to Las Vegas and come and participate at a convenient time. Since the start of the WSOP customarily provides one of the greatest concentrations of poker players in the world at any given time, this tournament fit comfortably into the weekend just prior to the start of the series.

The tournament was played over the Memorial Day weekend holiday, which is normally one of the busiest times of the year in Las Vegas.

Most WSOP gold bracelet tournaments are open events, which means anyone can enter (21 years or older). Each year, the exceptions are the Seniors Championship, the Casino Employees Championship, and the Ladies Championship. However, this event was technically not "open" since players could not buy into the tournament. Yet the reality is, more players had the opportunity to participate in this tournament than any other WSOP gold bracelet event in history. Anyone who made the cut based on a points-based system or qualified at one of the 15 Circuit stops was able to play in the National Championship. Since there were WSOP Circuit stops throughout the United States, more poker players essentially had a shot to win a gold bracelet in terms of accessibility than ever before.

This season, there were a total of 49,453 entries who participated in all the gold ring events held. This is the highest number ever. The three best-attended WSOP Circuit stop were at Hammond/Chicago, Durant/Dallas, and West Palm Beach. Two of these three stops were first-time locations.

The official 2011-2012 WSOP Circuit schedule is expected to be released sometime during the WSOP.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

The tournament was played over three consecutive days, from May 27-29, 2011.

There were 100 qualifiers. However, three players failed to appear. That meant there were 97 actual entries.

The three players who did not appear encountered various conflicts. One had previously scheduled a family trip to Europe and could not make the trip to Las Vegas. Another had surgery recently and was not able to travel. The third player found out he had qualified late and did not participate in the tournament because he could not make it in time from his home on the East Coast.

The total prize pool amounted to \$1,000,000.

The "freeroll" tournament started on a Friday. All competitors earned their way into the event. Players were not permitted to buy-in. The field size was limited to an exclusive club of 100 finalists who had accumulated enough points on a ranking scale or made Regional Championship final tables during the course of the WSOP Circuit season.

The champion Sam Barnhart was quite low on chips, following the conclusion of Day One. In fact, he had only 23,000 in chips, which was about one-third of the average stack size at that point.

Heads-up play lasted only about ten minutes. Barnhart dominated the closing moments. First, he crippled his lone adversary, Jim Anderson, by doubling up. A few hands later, Barnhart won the tournament by making two pair – kings and sevens.

2011 WSOP STATISTICS (THROUGH WSOPC NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP)

This year, there are 59 gold bracelet events being held in Las Vegas. This is an increase of two events over last year's number --57.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the nationalities of gold bracelet winners has been: United States (1)

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been: United States (1)

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 (0):

Semi-Pros (0): None

Amateurs (1): Sam Barnhart

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

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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www.wsop.com

For statistics and historical information from the 2011 World Series of Poker, contact Nolan Dalla at: nolandalla@aol.com or nolandalla@gmail.com

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