



2011 World Series of Poker Presented by Jack Link's Beef Jerky  
Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada

Official Report  
Event #22  
Pot-Limit Omaha  
Buy-In: \$1,500  
Number of Entries: 1,071  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,445,850  
Number of Places Paid: 117  
First Place Prize: \$292,825  
June 13-15, 2011

#### TOURNAMENT HEADLINES:

Wanted! French Poker Bandits Strike Again!

Back-to-Back WSOP Victories for France

Fellow Frenchman Elie Payan Wins WSOP Gold Bracelet One Day Following ElKY's Victory

European Poker Pro Collects \$292,825

WSOP Hosts Largest Live Pot-Limit Omaha Tournament in History!

Full House at the 2011 WSOP-- Tournament Attendance Still up Double Digits over Last Year

22 Gold Bracelets Won – 36 More Still to Go

#### OVERVIEW

WANTED!

French poker players have struck again! They are looting Las Vegas of currency and treasure!

The poker bandits reportedly landed at Las Vegas McCarran two weeks ago. Until yesterday, the band of stealthy desperados remained inconspicuous. No one at the Rio in Las Vegas seemed to notice or paid any attention to them. Tens of thousands of poker players who gathered for the 2011 World Series of Poker didn't see them coming.

Then yesterday, one of the sneaky bandits won the Seven-Card Stud World Championship, thereby earning his first-ever WSOP gold bracelet. During the raid, the ingrate (identified as Bertrand Gropellier) demonstrated little respect toward his fellow competitors. He avariciously devoured the chips of his tablemates, who were mostly Americans. The thief even had the audacity to snatch a gold bracelet from the 2011 WSOP collection and later show it off to hundreds of witnesses. Reports surfaced that afterwards he boasted the gold bracelet as his own. He was even seen wearing the spoils of his heist. The impertinence was appalling.

Now, it turns out this crime story is a double feature.

Elie Payan, won the \$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha championship. He has been identified as a 27-year-old man from Orleans, France. He claims to be a "Project Manager." According to data obtained from various poker websites, Payan has plundered other tournament prize pools in the past. Most of his earlier heists took place in Europe.

Payan is believed to have removed the grand sum of \$292,825 from the depleted bankrolls of 1,070 other poker players. The weapons used by Payan to commit his gross misdeed included several cards, chips, and an intimidating poker face.

Like his audacious fellow-Frenchman the night before, Payan also paraded around with the loot from his shameless act. He was last seen at midnight on the ESPN main stage pumping his fists into the air and singing *Le Marseillaise*. He was joined in unison by nearly two dozen unidentified French bystanders. It was not immediately known whether the compatriots were involved in the crime.

There's speculation that these two brazen acts are part of a much larger conspiracy. With WSOP Europe coming to France for the first time later this year, many believe French poker players are now determined to take as much loot out of the U.S. as possible, in preparation for seven upcoming gold bracelet events to be played in their home country. The 2011 edition of WSOP Europe will be played in Cannes (France) in October.

Someone stop them! French bandits are leaving the country with WSOP gold bracelets! They are seizing the cash of thousands of hard-working poker players from more than 100 different nations! They must be stopped!

*For a comprehensive recap of Event #22, please visit WSOP.com's official tournament portal page [HERE](#).*

### **EVENT #22 CHAMPION – ELIE PAYAN**

The 2011 World Series of Poker \$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha champion is Elie Payan, from Orleans, France.

Payan is a 27-year-old project manager.

Payan studied at a university and earned a B.A. in engineering.

Payan is fluent in his native language, French. He has a working-knowledge of English.

Payan previously cashed six times in major tournaments held in Europe. However, he had never won a live tournament until this point. This was his first time to cash at the WSOP.

Payan plays a lot of online poker. His player name is "Punisher934."

Remarkably, this was the first WSOP tournament Payan had ever entered. He became the seventh player so far this year to cash in what was their first-ever WSOP entry.

For his victory, Payan collected \$292,825 for first place.

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

Payan currently has \$292,825 in career WSOP winnings.

Payan is to be classified as an amateur poker player (in WSOP records and stats), since he has a full-time job and plays poker recreationally.

Payan becomes the second consecutive player from France to win a WSOP gold bracelet. Approximately 22 hours earlier, Bertrand Grospellier won his first WSOP title on the same ESPN stage. Many of the same supporters were in the crowd during both nights, cheering on the French players.

Payan becomes only the fifth French player to win a WSOP gold bracelet. The previous winners were Patrick Bruel, David Benyamine, Vanessa Hellebuyck, and Bertrand Grospellier.

## **WINNER QUOTES** (Note: The winner was interviewed at tableside moments after the victory)

### What's it like to win your very first WSOP gold bracelet?

*It's unspeakable. I do not know how to explain it. I am very, very happy.*

### How do you feel being the second player from France to win this year?

*For me personally, it is not that special as far as my nationality. But for poker in France – and for the game to grow there – I am very happy for that. I am very, very happy to win back to back, after ElkY (Bertrand Grospellier).*

## **THE FINAL TABLE**

The official final table was comprised of the top nine finishers.

The final table contained no former gold bracelet winners.

Three nations were represented at the final table – Finland (2 players), France (1 player), and the United States (6 players).

The heads-up battle between Elie Payan and Rafe Kibrit lasted about two hours. Kibrit took the lead for a while and had Payan all-in a few times, but was never able to finish off his last rival.

The runner up was Rafe Kibrit, from Buffalo Grove, IL. He previously worked as a floor trader before playing poker professionally. He is a 25-year-old alum of Indiana University. He has several online poker wins. This was his best showing at the WSOP, which paid \$181,222.

David Sands (Las Vegas, NV) finished in third place. At one time, he was the top-ranked online tournament player in the world (source: PocketFives.com). Sands has a Masters Degree and works as an Internet marketing analyst when he's not playing poker.

Juha Vilkki (Espoo, Finland) came in as the fourth-place finisher. This marked his first time to cash in a WSOP event.

Stephen Wolfe (Dallas, TX) ended up in fifth place. He is a software consultant. Wolfe has a lot of previous online cashes, but this was his first live cash in a WSOP event.

Emil Patel (New York, NY) finished in sixth place. He is a former NYU student with a degree in statistics and finance, who is now a poker pro. Patel had two previous high cashes at the WSOP (8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>) in 2008. He improved on those performances in his tournament.

Cody Munger (Jacksonville, FL) finished in seventh place. He jokingly called himself a “former” professional poker player, in reference to the events of Black Friday.

Jeff Sarwer (Helsinki, Finland) finished in eighth place. He had performed very well in Europe in the past, racking up more than \$500,000 in winnings. This marked his best WSOP finish, by far.

Roland Israelashvili (Forest Hills, NY) finished in ninth place. This was his best WSOP finish to date and third time to cash this year. Israelashvili is a two-time WSOP Circuit gold ring winner.

Final table play began at 2:30 pm on a Wednesday afternoon. Play ended at midnight. The finale went for about 9 hours, 30 minutes.

The final table was played on ESPN's Main Stage. The new final table set is getting raves in terms of design and appearance. No stage in the history of poker has ever looked as spectacular.

Action was streamed live over WSOP.com. Viewers can tune in and watch most of this year's final tables. Although hole cards are not shown, viewers can follow an overhead camera as well as a pan-shot of the table. The floor announcer provides an official account of the action.

## **OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS**

The top 117 finishers collected prize money.

Among the former gold bracelet winners who cashed in this tournament were – Ryan Welch (14), Quinn Do (15), Rob Hollink (70), “Captain” Tom Franklin (84), David Chiu (100), and Peter Smurfit (117).

Ryan Welch (Henderson, NV) won his title last year playing Triple-Chance No-Limit Hold'em.

An interesting occurrence: Nick Binger finished in 32<sup>nd</sup> place. His brother Michael Binger went out a few minutes later in 30<sup>th</sup> place.

Tournament results are to be included in the WSOP official records. Results are also to be included in the 2011 WSOP “Player of the Year” race.

“WSOP Player of the Year” standings can be found at WSOP.com [HERE](#).

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

This is the 914<sup>th</sup> gold bracelet awarded in World Series of Poker history. This figure includes every official WSOP event ever 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). Moreover for the first time ever, one gold bracelet was awarded for this year's winner of the WSOP Circuit National Championship.

The final table (Day Three) was played on the same day (and same time) as the decisive Game 7 of the National Hockey League (NHL) finals between Vancouver and Boston. Each WSOP overlaps major sporting events. Therefore, many poker players tend to watch games and are tuned into what's going on elsewhere. When the WSOP was played in May (1970-2004), the biggest side-attraction was the Kentucky Derby. When the WSOP moved into the summer months, the NBA finals became the most popular topic of discussion at many tables, aside from what was happening in the tournaments. Perhaps the most exciting WSOP side action occurs every four years when the World Cup (soccer) is played and games are televised inside the tournament rooms. Since the WSOP now attracts players from all over the world, many have watched their home-country teams play, as the tournaments are continuing. The last World Cup took place last year. The next time the World Cup will overlap the WSOP will be in 2014.

The official WSOP gold bracelet ceremony takes place on the day following the winner's victory (or some hours later when the tournament ends very late). 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. The ceremony usually starts around 2:20 pm. The national anthem of the winner's nation is played. The entire presentation is open to the public and media. Video and photography is permitted by both the public and members of the media.

Payan's gold bracelet ceremony is set to take place on Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>. The national anthem of France will be played in honor of his victory.

For the first time in history, World Series of Poker gold bracelets will be awarded in France, when WSOP Europe debuts in Cannes this coming October. Seven gold bracelet events are scheduled. Now, at least two French players are expected to be among the stars of that event – with a lot more poker still to be played.

## **EVENT HISTORY**

This was the largest live Pot-Limit Omaha tournament in history. There were 1,071 entries, which topped the previous mark (885) set in this event last year. So, the old record was shattered by 186 players, representing a 21 percent increase.

Sparked by widespread popularity in Europe, Pot-Limit Omaha tournament attendance at the WSOP continues to grow. Since the WSOP has been played at the Rio, here are the attendance figures for this event over the past seven years:

2005 – 291 players  
2006 -- 526 players  
2007 – 578 players

2008 – 758 players  
2009 – 809 players  
2010 – 885 players  
2011 – 1,071 players

Pot-Limit Omaha made its WSOP debut in 1984. The previous year, a Limit Omaha (High) event was held. The format changed to Pot-Limit the next year and has been part of the WSOP ever since.

The very first Pot-Limit Omaha champion was William Bennett, who won the \$84,000 top cash prize in 1984.

Previous WSOP Pot-Limit Omaha champions (some years included multiple events – all winners are listed):

(1984) William Bennett  
(1985) “Amarillo Slim” Preston; Zoran Smijanac  
(1986) David Baxter  
(1987) Hat “Deadman” Kant  
(1988) Gilbert Gross  
(1989) Blackie Blackburn  
(1990) “Amarillo Slim” Preston, Shawqui Shunnarah  
(1991) Jay Heimowitz, An Tran  
(1992) Hoyt Corkins; Billy Thomas  
(1993) Buddy Bonnacaze  
(1994) O’Neil Longson; Huck Seed  
(1995) Phil “Doc” Earle  
(1996) Sammy Farha; Jim Huntley  
(1997) Chris Bjin  
(1998) T.J. Cloutier  
(1999) Donn O’Dea; Hassan Komoei  
(2000) Johnny Chan  
(2001) Hassan Komoei; Galen Kester  
(2002) Robert Williamson III; Jan Hansen; Jack Duncan  
(2003) John Juanda; Johnny Chan; Erik Seidel  
(2004) Ted Lawson; Chau Giang  
(2005) Josh Arieh; Barry Greenstein; Phil Ivey; Rafi Amit  
(2006) Lee Watkinson; Ralph Perry  
(2007) Burt Boutin; Scott Clements; Alan Smurfit  
(2008) Dario Alioto; Vanessa Selbst; Phil Galfond; Layne Flack  
(2009) Matthew Graham; Jason Mercier; J.C. Tran; Richard Austin  
(2010) John Barch, Miguel Proulx, Chance Kornuth  
(2011) Elie Payan

Players with the most WSOP gold bracelets in Omaha-related events (all variations) are – T.J. Cloutier, Scotty Nguyen, and Phil Ivey, currently with three wins each.

The player with the most career WSOP cashes in Omaha-related events (all variations) is Brent Carter, currently with 21.

Players with the most WSOP gold bracelets (wins) in Pot-Limit Omaha are – “Amarillo Slim” Preston, Johnny Chan, and Phil Ivey, each currently with two.

The player with the most career WSOP cashes in Pot-Limit Omaha is Chau Giang, currently at 16.

## **TOURNAMENT PLAY**

The tournament was played over three consecutive days.

The tournament officially began on Monday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at noon. The tournament officially ended on Wednesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, at midnight.

## **2011 WSOP STATISTICS**

Through the conclusion of Event #22, the 2011 WSOP has attracted 23,578 entries. \$40,825,960 in prize money has been awarded to winners, so far.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the breakdown of nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (15)  
Great Britain (3)  
France (2)  
Russia (1)  
Canada (1)

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

United States (11)  
Great Britain (3)  
France (2)  
Ukraine (1)  
Israel (1)  
Russia (1)  
Honduras (1)  
Canada (1)  
Indonesia (1)

Through the conclusion of this event, the home-states of (American) winners have been:

Nevada (3)  
California (2)  
Texas (2)  
New York (2)  
Illinois (1)  
New Jersey (1)  
Florida (1)  
Tennessee (1)  
Connecticut (1)  
Indiana (1)

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

Professional Players (17): Jake Cody, Cheech Barbaro, Eugene Katchalov, Allen Bari, Harrison Wilder, Matt Perrins, Sean Getzwiller, Viacheslav Zhukov, David Diaz, Andrew Badecker, Tyler Bonkowski, Brian Rast, John Juanda, Aaron Steury, Darren Woods, Jason Somerville, Bertrand Gropellier

Semi-Pros (2): Sean R. Drake, Amir Lehavot

Amateurs (3): Geoffrey Klein, Foster Hays, Elie Payan

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the victories of seven of the 22 winners (32 percent) marked the first time the new champion had ever cashed at the WSOP.

Every WSOP held over the past 11 years has included at least one multiple gold bracelet champion (meaning two or more wins within the same year). The last year the WSOP was comprised exclusively of single-event winners was back in 1999. The record for most multiple gold bracelet winners within a single year was in 2009, when five players managed to win two or more titles. So far, no player has yet won two gold bracelets (this year).

The streak of male WSOP gold bracelet winners has now reached 183 consecutive events. Aside from the annual Ladies Championship, the last female player to win a WSOP tournament open to both sexes was Vanessa Selbst, in 2008. The longest "cold" streak for female players occurred between years 1982 and 1996, when 221 consecutive open events passed without a female champion.

The highest finishes by any female (open events) at this year's WSOP was by two players -- Maria Ho, who finished second (\$5,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em), and Kim Nguyen, who also finished as the runner up (\$1,500 buy-in Six-Handed Limit Hold'em).

At present, the three top money-winners from the 2011 WSOP are:

Allen Bari -- \$877,262  
Jake Cody -- \$851,192  
Foster Hays -- \$735,400

New records set at this year's WSOP (to date):

Biggest Heads-Up tournament prize pool in history (\$3,040,000) – Event #2  
Largest live Omaha High-Low Split Tournament in history (925 entries) – Event #3  
Largest live Six-Handed tournament in poker history (1,920 entries) – Event #10  
Biggest Deuce-to-Seven tournament prize pool in history (\$1,184,400) – Event #16  
Largest live \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament in history with single starting day (3,157 entries) – Event #18  
Largest consecutive-days starting field sizes in poker history (combined 6,238 entries) – Event #18 and Event #20  
Largest live Pot-Limit Omaha tournament in poker history (1,071 entries) – Event #22

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

*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](http://WSOP.com)*

---

For official news and the latest updates from the 2011 World Series of Poker, visit: [WSOP.com](http://WSOP.com)