



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

Official Report  
Event #35  
Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha  
Buy-In: \$5,000  
Number of Entries: 507  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$2,382,900  
Number of Places Paid: 48  
First Place Prize: \$619,575  
June 20-22, 2011

### **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES:**

No Mercy

Jason Mercier Wins \$5K Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha Championship

Mercier's Collects \$619,575, Now up to \$1.5 Million in Career Winnings

Mercier Wins Second WSOP Gold Bracelet – Both in PLO

Full House at the 2011 WSOP-- Tournament Attendance over Last Year

35 Gold Bracelets Won – 23 More Still to Go

### **OVERVIEW**

Jason Mercier added to his lustrous list of poker accomplishments today, by winning his second World Series of Poker gold bracelet.

Mercier won the latest Pot-Limit Omaha competition, held at the Rio in Las Vegas. The professional poker player from Davie, FL, overcame a strong field totaling 507 entrants, and earned what must be considered as his most impressive career win. No doubt, given the field size and quality of competition, this was as huge a test as Mercier had ever faced.

Mercier collected \$619,575 in prize money for first place. He also solidified his reputation as one of the world's top Pot-Limit Omaha tournament players. Mercier won his first gold bracelet two years ago in a \$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha tournament. He repeated his game dominance again this year, with a victory in the \$5,000 buy-in Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha event.

Throughout the three-day tournament, Mercier looked like a player who expected to win. He gradually built several tall towers of chips, which became increasingly more intimidating as the tournament went on and played down to few players. By the time the final table was reached on the third day, Mercier enjoyed the chip lead and was never in serious danger of being eliminated.

With this victory, Mercier shattered the \$1 million mark in career WSOP earnings. He now has more than \$1.5 million in lifetime earnings – which includes 18 cashes. In worldwide tournaments, Mercier now has

more than \$6 million in live earnings. He reportedly has accomplished online results that are just as impressive.

The runner up was Hans Winzeler, originally from Managua, Nicaragua now living in Florida. Had Winzeler managed to win, he would have become the first WSOP winner in history from Nicaragua. Instead, he settled for second place, which paid \$383,075.

This was the first time a Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha tournament had ever been held at the WSOP.

Among former gold bracelet winners who cashed in this tournament were: David Chiu (4th), David "Devilfish" Ulliott (13th), Erick Lindgren (17th), Vanessa Selbst (18th), Jeff Lisandro (26th), John Kabbaj (30th), Layne Flack (31st) and Jesper Hougaard (44th).

*For a comprehensive recap of Event #35, please visit the WSOP.com tournament portal page [HERE](#).*

### **EVENT #35 CHAMPION – JASON MERCIER**

The 2011 World Series of Poker \$5,000 buy-in Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha champion is Jason Mercier, from Davie, FL.

Mercier is a 24-year-old professional poker player. He is one of the most widely-respected younger players in the game.

Mercier was born in Hollywood, FL. He is one of four children.

Mercier attended Florida Atlantic University.

This marks the fourth year Mercier has attended the WSOP.

For his victory, Mercier collected \$619,575 for first place.

According to official records, Mercier now has 2 wins, 3 final table appearances, and 18 in-the-money finishes at the WSOP.

Mercier currently has \$1,598,137 in career WSOP winnings.

This was Mercier's fourth cash this year – which includes four finishes all within the top 30 (1<sup>st</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup>).

Mercier's first gold bracelet was won in 2009, in the \$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha event. He now has two victories in PLO.

Mercier was cheered on to victory by his high school basketball coach, who was in the gallery. His coach was also present when Mercier won his first gold bracelet two years ago.

Mercier has more than \$6 million in overall live tournament earnings. His first major victory took place at the European Poker Tour's stop in San Remo (Italy), in 2008.

Mercier is to be classified as a professional poker player (in WSOP records and stats), since he has been a full-time player for the past five years.

With this victory, Mercier now has two wins in Pot-Limit Omaha. He joins the following players as the only multiple gold bracelet winners in this form of poker – "Amarillo Slim" Preston, Johnny Chan and Phil Ivey.

### **WINNER INTERVIEW**

#### **On becoming widely-acknowledged as one of the world's top players:**

"It's important to me for people to think I am one of the best. I think I am getting to that level, if I am not already there. Obviously, winning tournaments and winning WSOP bracelets just adds to that. I feel like if I win a third one, it will do even more for me. I'm ready to play in as many World Series of Poker events as I can to get as many gold bracelets as I can."

#### **On winning his second WSOP gold bracelet:**

"It feels awesome to win a second WSOP gold bracelet, especially in PLO. I won my first one in PLO. It just feels amazing. I've had so many deep runs so far at this year's series, so it feels good to close it out."

*On keeping a huge stack of chips in front in the form of a chip castle, and declining to color up chips:*

"I had a monster stack since Day Two. But as they color up, I had to keep trying to build it back up....it's just a superstitious thing. If I keep accumulating the small chips, I can start building up something nice. I like to make it fun and draw some attention."

*On some of his friends also having a great WSOP, and gaining their crowd support:*

"When Allen (Bari) won, that was one of the biggest rushes I've ever had. It's awesome and fun to see your friends win, especially if you have a financial interest in how they do."

*On his goals and expectations:*

"Winning is not expected. Putting myself in a position to win is always expected. Being able to close the job when I get there just makes me more confident as I move forward. I expect to make deep runs, and eventually win some tournaments. But I don't expect to show up at every tournament expecting to win."

## **THE FINAL TABLE**

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

The final table contained two former gold bracelet winners – David Chiu (4 wins) and Jason Mercier (1 win).

Two nations were represented at the final table – Canada (1 player) and the United States (5 players).

When heads-up play began, Mercier was ahead of Hans Winzeler by a slight margin. The duel lasted about two hours. Winzeler had the chip lead for a time, but Mercier regained his advantage and won the last hand of the tournament by making a straight on the river.

The runner up was Hans Winzeler, from Managua, Nicaragua. His second-place finish was the highest in history by any player from Nicaragua. Winzeler also resides in Florida when inside the United States. That made the heads-up match an all-Florida finale. Winzeler is a 25-year-old poker pro. Second place paid \$383,075.

The third-place finisher was Steven Merrifield, from Fairmont, WV. He is a 26-year-old poker pro and a graduate of West Virginia University. This marked Merrifield's third WSOP final table appearance. Third place paid \$239,100.

The fourth-place finisher was four-time gold bracelet winner David Chiu, from Las Vegas, NV. The closest Chiu could get to the chip lead was when he found himself second in chips when final table play began. Chiu, a 50-year-old poker pro, won his last WSOP victory in 2005. Fourth place paid \$156,628.

The fifth-place finisher was Joseph Ressler, from North Potomac, MD. He is a 23-year-old poker pro. Ressler is a graduate of Emory University. He earned \$105,967 in prize money.

The sixth-place finisher was Michael McDonald, from Waterloo, Ontario (Canada). He is a 21-year-old poker pro. McDonald holds the record as the youngest European Poker Tour (EPT) winner in history. Sixth place paid \$73,965.

Final table play began at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday. Play concluded 7 hours later, at 1:30 a.m. Thursday.

When final table play began, Jason Mercier enjoyed a slight chip lead over his closest rivals – David Chiu and Steven Merrifield.

Mercier had a large cheering section. Interesting side note: Many of the supporters were players who had played in the same event, and had busted out.

The final table was played on ESPN's main stage. The new final table set this year is getting raves in terms of design and appearance. No stage in the history of poker has ever looked as spectacular. Viewers will be able to see ESPN's coverage again once the WSOP Main Event begins in July.

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 48 finishers collected prize money.

Among former gold bracelet winners who cashed in this tournament -- aside from the players who made the final table -- were: David "Devilfish" Ulliott (13<sup>th</sup>), Erick Lindgren (17<sup>th</sup>), Vanessa Selbst (18<sup>th</sup>), Jeff Lisandro (26<sup>th</sup>), John Kabbaj (30<sup>th</sup>), Layne Flack (31<sup>st</sup>) and Jesper Hougaard (44<sup>th</sup>).

Chalk up another cash for "Top Cat." Tony Cousineau, the Daytona Beach-based poker pro, added to his long legacy of WSOP cashes. He now holds the record as the player with the most WSOP cashes in history, without a gold bracelet. "Top Cat" now has 49 career cashes, which is a dozen more than the next-ranked player in that category.

Roland "Speedy" Israelashvili cashed again, finishing 43<sup>rd</sup>. This marked his fifth time to cash this year, which places him among the leaders in that category. The all-time record for most cashes within a single year is held by Nikolay Evdakov, with 10.

With his cash in this tournament, David "Devilfish" Ulliott has 13 PLO-related career cashes, which is second only to Chau Giang, with 16.

Tournament results are to be included in all official WSOP 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](#). Phil Hellmuth, Jr. currently leads the "WSOP Player of the Year" point race.

### **ODDS AND ENDS**

This is the first time in history that a Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha tournament has been included on the WSOP schedule. Many Six-Handed No-Limit Hold'em tournaments have been held in the past and Pot-Limit Omaha tournaments have been a WSOP fixture since 1984; however, there had never been a Six-Handed Omaha competition until this tournament was offered.

This inaugural tournament attracted 507 entries.

This is the 927<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 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 p.m. 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.

Mercier's gold bracelet ceremony is set to take place on Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>. The national anthem of the USA will be played in honor of his victory.

### **POT-LIMIT OMAHA HISTORY**

The previous Pot-Limit Omaha tournament held this year (Event #22) set a new record as the largest live Pot-Limit Omaha tournament in history. There were 1,071 entries. This is the largest Six-Handed variant ever held, but was also the first of its kind.

Sparked by widespread popularity in Europe and online, 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 the \$1,500 buy-in 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, Jason Mercier

Players with the most WSOP gold bracelets in Omaha-related events (all variations) are – T.J. Cloutier, Scotty Nguyen, and Phil Ivey (tie), 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, Phil Ivey and Jason Mercier (tie), 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 scheduled to be played over three consecutive days/nights – which ran into a fourth day due to the late finish.

Day One began with 507 entries and ended with 105 survivors.

Day Two began with 105 players and ended with 27 survivors.

Day Three began with 27 players, which played down to the winner.

The tournament officially began on Monday, June 20<sup>th</sup> at noon. The tournament officially ended early Thursday morning, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 1:45 am.

### **OVERALL WSOP STATISTICS (THROUGH MIDWAY POINT, END OF EVENT #29)**

In general, younger people are outperforming older people at this year's WSOP. Case in point:

Average age of all entrants: 36.2 years

Average age of all players who cashed: 34.9 years

Average age of all final table players: 33.9 years

Average age of all winners: 28.8 years

The WSOP continued to attract players from all over the world:

Number of countries represented (to date): 74

Number of countries which have had at least one player to cash: 62

Number of U.S. state represented: 50

Number of Canadian provinces represented: 10

The overall percentage of females who have entered gold bracelet events is 3.2 percent.

### **MORE 2011 WSOP STATISTICS**

Through the conclusion of Event #35 the 2011 WSOP has attracted 45,105 combined total entries. \$69,351,060 in prize money has been awarded to winners.

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

United States (24)

Canada (4)

Great Britain (3)

France (2)

Russia (1)

Ukraine (1)

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

United States (19)

Canada (4)

Great Britain (3)

France (2)

Ukraine (2)

Israel (1)

Russia (1)

Honduras (1)

Indonesia (1)

Germany (1)

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

California (5)

Nevada (3)

New York (3)

Texas (2)

Illinois (2)

Florida (2)

New Jersey (1)  
Tennessee (1)  
Connecticut (1)  
Indiana (1)  
Maryland (1)  
Virginia (1)  
Michigan (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 (27): 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, John Monnette, Elie Payon, Mark Radoja, Chris Viox, Dan Idema, Andy Frankenberger, Chris Lee, Sam Stein, Mark Schmid, Jason Mercier

Semi-Pros (4): Sean R. Drake, Amir Lehavot, Oleksii Kovalchuk, Eric Rosawig

Amateurs (4): Geoffrey Klein, Foster Hays, James Hess, Kirk Caldwell

Since tracking first started in 2005, this year's WSOP has the greatest disparity of professionals winning over semi-pros and amateurs than any year recorded, so far – with 29 out of 35 events being won by pros or semi-pros.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the victories of eight of the 35 winners (23 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 consecutive male WSOP gold bracelet winners has now reached 194 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 finish 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).

The highest finish by any defending champion at this year's WSOP was by David Baker, who finished in sixth place after winning the previous \$10,000 buy-in No-Limit Deuce-to-Seven Draw Lowball World Championship.

New tournament records set at the 2011 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 day start (3,157 entries) – Event #18
- Largest live \$1,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament in history with single day start (3,175 entries) – Event #20
- Largest consecutive-days starting field sizes in poker history (combined 6,332 entries) – Event #18 and Event #20
- Largest live Pot-Limit Omaha tournament in poker history (1,071 entries) – Event #22
- Largest Mixed-Game (Eight-Game Mix) in poker history (489 entries) – Event #23
- Largest Seniors tournament in poker history (3,752 entries) – Event #30
- Biggest Seniors No-Limit Hold'em championship prize pool in history (\$3,376,800) – Event #30

Largest single-day live tournament start in poker history (3,752 entries) – Event #30  
Largest consecutive-days starting field sizes in poker history (combined 6,580 entries) – Event #30/Event #32 (broke Event #18/Event #20 record from earlier in 2011 WSOP)  
Largest four-consecutive days field sizes in poker history (2,500+3,752+2,828+3,144 =12,224 entries) -- Events 28, 30, 32, 34, June 16-19, 2011

New player records set at the 2011 WSOP (to date):

The 35-year span between Artie Cobb's first cash in this event (1976) and most recent cash in the same event (2011) represents the longest time span in WSOP history. He accomplished this in Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split (Event #25).  
Phil Hellmuth, Jr. added to his record as the individual all-time leader in cashes (81) and final table appearances (42).

### **RAISING AWARENESS: BAD BEAT ON CANCER AND THE WSOP**

Bad Beat on Cancer was created in 2003 by Phil Gordon and Rafe Furst as an easy and fun way for poker players to donate to the Prevent Cancer Foundation. It all began when Chris Moneymaker pledged 1 percent of his 2003 Main Event winnings and went on to capture the championship, contributing \$25,000 when he was awarded the \$2,500,000 first- place prize. By taking the pledge, wearing the patch, and joining 'Team 1%', players can feel good supporting a cause that only benefits when they win. As the official charity of the WSOP, pledges simply indicate to the payouts staff that they are donating 1 percent of their winnings, and the funds are automatically withheld. A tax receipt is generated and sent to their mailing address. Several high profile professionals have made 'life pledges' of 1 percent of all their winnings -- including Annie Duke, Phil Hellmuth Jr., Lee Childs, Paul Wasicka, Andy Bloch, Dennis Phillips, and others. Since 2003, the initiative has raised over \$3,500,000 for cancer prevention research, education, and community outreach programs. Players can pick up a patch and join Team 1% by stopping by the Bad Beat on Cancer booth, located at the 2011 WSOP opposite the Amazon Room in the concourse. The Nevada Cancer Institute based in Las Vegas is a benefiting charity from the Bad Beat on Cancer.

*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)*

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