



2011 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 Poker Player's Championship  
Buy-In: \$50,000  
Number of Entries: 128  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$6,144,000  
Number of Places Paid: 16  
First Place Prize: \$1,720,328  
July 2-6, 2011

## **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES**

Rast has a Blast

Brian Rast Wins 2011 Poker Player's Championship

New Champion Rakes-In Monster \$1,720,328 Pot

Rast Becomes the Only Multi-Gold Bracelet Winner at 2011 WSOP

Third Time Not a Charm -- Phil Hellmuth Misses His 12<sup>th</sup> WSOP Title for Third Time This Year

Rast Overcomes 5-to-1 Chip Disadvantage, Stages Dramatic Comeback Victory over Hellmuth

Full House at the 2011 WSOP -- Tournament Attendance Currently on Record Pace

55 Gold Bracelets Won – Only Three More Events Still to Go

## **THE 2011 POKER PLAYER'S CHAMPIONSHIP**

The 2011 edition of the \$50,000 buy-in Poker Player's Championship was won by Brian Rast, a professional poker player from Las Vegas, NV. He topped a brutally tough field of 128 of the world's best poker players who competed in a mixed game format played over five consecutive days.

Rast collected a whopping \$1,720,328 in prize money, which was the richest cash prize of any tournament at this year's World Series of Poker. Only the WSOP Main Event Championship will have a larger top prize. He was also presented with his second WSOP gold bracelet. Three weeks earlier, Rast won his first victory in the \$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Hold'em championship. Rast is the first and only player with multiple wins at this year's WSOP.

Rast's victory was special for at least one other reason. His name was added to the illustrious list of former Poker Player's Championship winners -- which includes David "Chip" Reese, Freddy Deeb, Scotty Nguyen, David Bach and Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi. The championship trophy now in Rast's possession is named in honor of the late Chip Reese, who won the inaugural \$50,000 buy-in championship, held in 2006.

The tournament was nearly as memorable for what happened to the second-place finisher, Phil Hellmuth. Remarkably, this was his third runner-up finish at the 2011 WSOP. He became the first player in WSOP history to achieve three second-place finishes at a series, with no wins. Hellmuth could take some pride in accomplishing three very strong runner-up finishes. He also collected the largest WSOP prize of his career. The second-place consolation prize amounted to \$1,063,034.

Following the conclusion of the tournament at 3:30 a.m., both players were interviewed. The transcripts of those interviews follow:

## **PHIL HELLMUTH -- ON THE RECORD**

### On his self-evaluation of his performance:

"I mean, you know, I actually feel pretty good. I feel like, God -- I played so good for five days."

### On why he shoved on a draw on what turned out to be the final hand:

"On the last hand, I caught the straight and flush draw. He bet 500,000 and moved in. He had to have the nuts."

### On his status as one of the world's most famous poker players:

"Look, I wanted to prove to myself, and just to myself really, that I'm a pretty good player....The world in general has been great to me. My fans have been great to me. I feel really good about the treatment and a ton of people here watching. It just makes me feel really good that there are so many people out there rooting for me. And I'm so happy about that. I've been way too cocky in the past, and I hear my critics. That's the problem."

### On his three runner-up finishes at the 2011 WSOP:

"I think I put on a spectacular performance at the Series this year. So, I'm happy about that. But I'd trade three seconds for a first, any day. I already have 11 bracelets; you have to understand this is the number one bracelet that I wanted -- I mean this and the Main Event. So, to come this close, to taste it, and then fall short, was disappointing."

### On losing what was a 5-to-1 chip lead when playing heads-up versus Brian Rast:

"You never count the victory. I mean I've already had two seconds, so believe me I didn't count the victory. I believe that if I hit any of those three flush draws, I win the tournament. I just missed three of them and, you know, I proved a lot to myself."

### More on his status as a poker superstar:

"The problem is when you're someone like me, who has a lot of championships. Like (NBA coach) Phil Jackson, he has a lot of championships, right? Then he left the game, he said something about his critics. I hear my critics all the time. I hear these people say, 'Oh you can't do it, you're not very good' and so you don't do it for the critics, you do it for the fans and you do it for your family."

## **BRIAN RAST -- ON THE RECORD**

### On playing this tournament on national television:

"This is really the first time I've played on television for a final table. I was on one time for like day one of the World Series of Poker Main Event. I was on Phil Hellmuth's table like three or four years ago. I don't know -- I didn't really feel that much pressure. It was kind of cool. I actually liked playing here more, because it was more of a loud environment, like the other table over there (for his first victory) was really small and there wasn't much room and it didn't feel like a final table. You're used to, being a poker player, the WPT, WSOP final tables all have big cheering sections and people go crazy when you win or lose pots and the other one didn't feel like that. And this one definitely had that feel and that excitement. And definitely added something, I felt a lot more excited at the end of the tournament. Like when I faded those flush draws for the third time, I definitely got a charged feeling just from the feeling in the air that was happening."

### On his decision to buy into the \$50,000 Poker Player's Championship:

"I think it was because I won the other tournament that I decided to buy into this one. I felt like I was plus-EV in this event, but not by a lot and 50K is a lot to put up, which is why I sold some of my action. I'm not really a mixed game player. I feel like I have some experience and I'm probably better than most people think I am at the mixed games. But by no means do I consider myself to be one of the top mixed game players. I mean it does have No-Limit Hold'em and PLO. And the final table is Hold'em, so I thought that was a definite advantage for me."

On being down 5-to-1 in chips at one point when heads-up:

"It was pretty amazing. There wasn't a back and forth. He just won every pot for like an hour. It was pretty frustrating. I just told myself 'don't do anything to try and take control of what's going on. Just like play your cards, pick your spots.' I was still picking up a few small pots here and there. You know, most of those I didn't have anything. I waited for a spot. I called it off with ace-high in a spot, where I think he had the flush draw a huge percentage of the time, and I was getting a good price. After that he just kept the gas on, he kept playing flush draws really strong. Like the K-7 hand, he has no over card and no straight draw, when he gets it in he's always behind. The last one, when I bet 500k and he went all in for 9 million, I'm going to fold a lot. But when I call, he's in trouble. It was lucky to fade those. Luck is a very strange thing, and you could almost say he got lucky at the first part when I had T-5 suited and nothing every time he raised me and luck is a strange thing and I got lucky to win, and I'm happy about that."

On being low on chips at one point during both of his two victories:

"It's funny, in both of these tournaments I won this summer, I got really short and was all in. At the beginning of Day Two, I showed up a little late. I actually blinded off about 14K. I lost two pretty big pots that were kind of sick.... One of the key moments is I was all in -- I had to catch a 6 or 4 or 3, and I caught a 4 of diamonds. After that pot, I went on a sick tear, busted Sorel Mizzi with aces to his queens in the blinds, and basically went up to being second or third in chips behind Gus Hansen. In that two hour span, it was the same thing. I went from being all in and behind, to one of the chip leaders in an hour."

On playing against Phil Hellmuth and denying him a 12<sup>th</sup> gold bracelet:

"I mean, like, that's Phil's thing. I know he's going for his 12<sup>th</sup> bracelet. I'm happy for him, but I don't really care though. It doesn't matter for me that he gets his 12<sup>th</sup> bracelet for the poker world. I respect the fact that he cares so much. Phil's always been really nice to me and even made a really nice comment at the table to me. He definitely gets frustrated, but I never feel like it's personally directed at me. There was maybe once or twice when he was losing some pots to me, he was saying more or less that I was trying to run over him. But really he was trying to run over me and I wasn't letting him, so that was frustrating him. But it's cool. I think Phil for the most part is a pretty nice guy and he lost graciously and had nothing but nice things to say to me, and I respect the fact that he cares."

On what he was feeling during the final hand when he realized he would win:

"Well, the first thing that's going through my head is I can't believe he just moved all-in. Really, I mean it's such a strange play. I understand him shipping it with 9-6 of hearts when I had 2 million (down 5-to-1). Even like, the way he played the T-8 of clubs. But this one we both have 9 million in chips, and I know I've been leading weak, which is why I played it like that. At the very least I could go lead, lead, lead, and get three calls out of him. It was very surprising to me that that was the play he decided to make. I thought he played really well all tournament. But I didn't really like that play. He's sitting with 9 million, with a million that's in the pot, and every time he gets called he's in very bad shape. So, he made the play and I said the 'I'm sorry' thing out of respect more than anything else. I was being cordial with Phil the whole final table and so I said, 'I'm sorry, I call.' I didn't mean it any way to be condescending."

On what winning a second WSOP gold bracelet means:

"This bracelet means a lot; this is an event that is basically full of a lot of the top players, not every top player but a lot of them. It's an event that you have to go through a lot of top players to win. The \$1,500 Pot-Limit Hold'em, it's a great win and my first bracelet. But, you know, it's not like I really played a whole bunch of the top professionals and beat them to win that bracelet – and this event I did that. And you know the buy-in is \$50,000, so it's a prestigious tournament that kind of like earns respect. It's almost like, say you go play in a cash game and you win \$100,000 or something playing with all amateurs. Hey, it's like you won money and that's great and everyone's happy for you. But if you went and played in Bobby's Room against Phil Ivey and Patrick Antonius and you won, you know people are going to say 'Wow, you know you can really play, and didn't just beat guys that don't know what they're doing.' It's nice that I can say that I beat some of the best players in the world and ran good for four days."

For a comprehensive recap of Event #55, please visit the WSOP.com tournament portal page [HERE](#).

**EVENT #55 CHAMPION – BRIAN RAST**

The 2011 World Series of Poker \$50,000 buy-in Poker Player's Championship is Brian Rast, from Poway, CA. He also owns a condo in Las Vegas at Panorama Towers, which is home for many of the world's top poker pros.

Rast is 29-years-old. He was born in Denver, CO.

Rast left Stanford University before graduating. He is now a professional poker player. Rast has enjoyed the support of his family ever since he initially made the decision to try and make it as a pro.

Rast is now engaged to his fiancé, who resides in Brazil. He hopes to bring her to the U.S. immediately following the conclusion of the WSOP.

Rast says he will not play in the WSOP Main Event this year because he is committed to assist his fiancé with her coming to the United States as a permanent resident.

Rast has enjoyed some tournament success prior to this year's WSOP. But he is noted primarily for his cash-game prowess. Rast has played nosebleed high stakes and is well-respected by those who know the cash game culture.

Rast's favorite poker game is Pot-Limit Omaha.

For his victory, Rast collected \$1,720,328 for first place. This is the largest prize for first place awarded this year.

According to official records, Rast now has 2 wins, 3 final table appearances and 8 in-the-money finishes at the WSOP.

Rast currently has \$2,231,764 in career WSOP winnings.

Rast is to be classified as a professional poker player (in WSOP records and stats). He has been playing full-time for about seven years.

### **THE FINAL TABLE**

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

The final table contained four former gold bracelet winners – including Phil Hellmuth, Brian Rast, Scott Seiver and Ben Lamb.

All players who made it to the final table were Americans.

The runner up was Phil Hellmuth, from Palo Alto, CA. Remarkably, this was the third runner-up finish this year for Hellmuth. He previously came in second in the Deuce-to-Seven Lowball Championship as well as the Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split Championship. Nevertheless, he could take pride in adding to his record as the all-time cashes (84) and final table appearances (43) leader.

Hellmuth also won more prize money in this event than any previous WSOP cash in his career. Second place paid \$1,063,034. Hellmuth's 1989 world championship victory "only" paid \$755,000.

Final table play began Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. Played concluded about 11 hours later (playing time wise) at 2:30 a.m.

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 filmed for broadcast on ESPN with an air date set for Tuesday, August 9.

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

The top 16 finishers collected prize money.

Aside from those who made it to the final table, among those who cashed in this tournament were former gold bracelet winners Jason Lester, Jeffrey Lisandro, Yan Chen, Josh Arie and Barry Greenstein.

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](#). Hellmuth took over the lead in the current standings while Rast vaulted up to third place.

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

This tournament attracted 128 entries. Attendance was up by 10 percent over last year, when there were 116 entries.

This is the 947<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.

## **EVENT HISTORY**

Costing \$50,000 to enter, this is the highest buy-in tournament in WSOP history. The precursor to this event was the \$50,000 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. World Championship, created in 2006. A high buy-in tournament above the \$10,000 level was first conceived by a group of high-stakes players. The initial thought behind the \$50,000 buy-in tournament was to create poker's version of an all-star game. Poker pro Daniel Negreanu was the concept's strongest advocate. He approached Caesars Entertainment and the tournament was green-lighted onto the 2006 WSOP schedule by Howard Greenbaum, Vice-President of Specialty Games for Caesars Entertainment.

The inaugural 2006 H.O.R.S.E. World Championship was memorable for many reasons. Since the late 1970s, David "Chip" Reese had been widely-regarded by most peers and industry insiders as the best all-around poker player in the world. Fittingly, he won the WSOP's first mega-buy-in event with multiple games, defeating the world's top players. Following his passing in 2007, the "Chip Reese Memorial Trophy" was created and presented to those who followed his triumph.

The previous winners of this event were as follows:

Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi (2010)  
David "Gunslinger" Bach (2009)  
Scotty "the Prince" Nguyen (2008)  
Kassem "Freddy" Deeb (2007)  
David "Chip" Reese (2006)

This event has traditionally been held midway through the WSOP schedule. However, it was placed at the front of the schedule last year, due in part to ESPN's interest in filming the tournament. This year, the tournament was moved late into the schedule for the same reason. ESPN has televised this tournament four of the five years it has been played, with 2009 as the only "dark" year.

Although there are only six winners to date, no event champion has ever repeated.

## **2011 WSOP STATISTICS**

Through the conclusion of Event #55 the 2011 WSOP has attracted 65,066 combined total entries; \$121,238,460 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 (34)  
Canada (5)  
Ukraine (4)  
France (4)

Great Britain (3)  
Russia (3)  
Brazil (1)  
Pakistan (1)

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

United States (30)  
Canada (5)  
Ukraine (4)  
France (4)  
Great Britain (3)  
Russia (3)  
Israel (1)  
Honduras (1)  
Indonesia (1)  
Germany (1)  
Brazil (1)  
Pakistan (1)

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

California (7)  
New York (6)  
Nevada (5)  
Texas (3)  
Florida (2)  
Illinois (2)  
Connecticut (2)  
New Jersey (1)  
Tennessee (1)  
Indiana (1)  
Maryland (1)  
Virginia (1)  
Michigan (1)  
North Dakota (1)  
Washington (1)  
Ohio (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 (43): Jake Cody, Cheech Barbaro, Eugene Katchalov, Allen Bari, Harrison Wilder, Matt Perrins, Sean Getzwiller, Viacheslav Zhukov, David Diaz, Andrew Badecker, Tyler Bonkowski, Brian Rast (2 wins), John Juanda, Aaron Steury, Darren Woods, Jason Somerville, Bertrand Grospellier, John Monnette, Elie Payan, Mark Radoja, Chris Viox, Dan Idema, Andy Frankenberger, Chris Lee, Sam Stein, Mark Schmid, Jason Mercier, Mikhail Lakhitov, Fabrice Soulier, Mitch Schock, Matt Jarvis, Justin Pechie, Ben Lamb, Rep Porter, Andre Akkari, Joe Ebanks, Lenny Martin, Athanasios Polychronopoulos, Antonin Teisseire, Matt Matros, Marsha Wolak and Maxim Lykov

Semi-Pros (5): Sean R. Drake, Amir Lehavot, Oleksii Kovalchuk, Eric Rosawig, Arkadiy Tsinis

Amateurs (7): Geoffrey Klein, Foster Hays, James Hess, Kirk Caldwell, Ken Griffin, Owais Ahmed, David Singontiko

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 48 out of 55 events being won by pros or semi-pros.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the victories of 11 of the 55 winners (20 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. Rast's victory in this tournament means the multi-gold bracelet streak will continue for at least another year.

The streak of consecutive male WSOP gold bracelet winners is currently at 211 consecutive events. Aside from the annual Ladies Poker 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 finished second (\$5,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em). Kim Nguyen 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 after winning the previous \$10,000 buy-in No-Limit Deuce-to-Seven Draw Lowball World Championship finished in sixth place in defense of his title.

Reigning world poker champions rarely perform well the following year after their victory. Chris "Jesus" Ferguson was the last world champion to win a gold bracelet the next year, which happened in 2001. Perhaps it's due to the increasing size of the fields. But there's also great pressure on the champions to do well. What follows is a list of the only world champions in history to win a gold bracelet after winning the championship during the previous year:

Johnny Moss (1975)  
Doyle Brunson (1977)  
Bobby Baldwin (1979)  
Stu Ungar (1981)  
Johnny Chan (1988)  
Hamid Dastmalchi (1993)  
Chris "Jesus" Ferguson (2001)

By contrast, players who make it to the final table of the Main Event Championship (November Nine) one year tend to do quite well in subsequent WSOP years. Consider that last year, three former Main Event finalists won gold bracelets – Eric Buchman, Tex Barch, and Scott Montgomery. This year, Matt Jarvis won his first gold bracelet one year after making it to the November Nine in 2010.

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 (3157 entries) – Event #18  
Largest live \$1,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament in history with single day start (3175 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  
Largest Mixed Pot-Limit tournament in history (606 entries) – Event #39  
Biggest Pot-Limit Omaha prize pool in live poker history (\$3,393,400) – Event #42

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 added to his record as the individual all-time leader in cashes (84) and final table appearances (43).

Howard "Tahoe" Andrew added to his record as the player with the longest consecutive streak of WSOP appearances (entering at least one event), currently at 38 years and counting (1974 to present).

### **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, 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)*

---