



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

**Official Report
Event #5
Pot-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In: \$1,500
Number of Entries: 639
Total Net Prize Pool: \$862,650
Number of Places Paid: 72
First Place Prize: \$189,818
May 30 - June 1, 2012**

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

First the Ring, then the Bracelet

Nick Jivkov Takes Pot-Limit Hold'em Championship Following Previous WSOP Circuit Victory

Poker Superstar Daniel Negreanu Finishes Fifth

Americans Now Five for Five in Gold Bracelet Events

Five Gold Bracelets Won – 57 More at Stake!

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TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

"First the ring, then the bracelet." The motto, effectively parroted the past few years on the World Series of Poker Circuit, encouraged poker players to compete in various events around the country, which are spread out over the nine months when the WSOP "big one" is dormant. The National Circuit is a stair ladder to greater success for many poker players, who may not quite have the bankrolls or skills necessary to come and play with the best at the world at the WSOP.

Nick Jivkov, a 34-year-old semi-pro poker player and business owner from Des Plaines, IL, took the slogan literally. He cashed 10 times in various WSOP Circuit events around the country during the last few years, ultimately winning a gold ring in 2010 at the IP in Biloxi. Until this year, Jivkov had yet to cash in any WSOP event in Las Vegas.

All that changed last night when Jivkov not only final tabled the Pot-Limit Hold'em event, which took place at the Rio Las Vegas. He went on to win a dramatic victory, rubber-stamping his arrival on the tournament poker scene as a champion. Jivkov collected \$189,818 in prize money to go along with his first WSOP gold bracelet. Amazingly, this was the second tournament Jivkov has shipped in the last four days. He won one of the Deep Stack No-Limit Hold'em events at the Rio, a few hours after getting off the plane – good for another \$14,000.

Jivkov was born in Bulgaria. He owns a transportation company in the Chicago area. He is the father to two girls – ages 6 and 2. No doubt, he made the entire Jivkov family proud on this day.

Jivkov's victory was as dominant a performance as has been seen in some time. He seized the chip lead about midway into the final playing session, which attracted a big crowd to the ESPN Main Stage – mainly to watch and see if poker

superstar Daniel Negreanu might pick up a fifth gold bracelet. Like Negreanu, they departed eventually in disappointment, much to the benefit of Jivkov, who essentially took over the tournament at that point. When play was at four handed, Jivkov had 60 percent of the chips in play. He was the cat toying with mice.

Runner up Bryan Pellegrino put up a noble fight. He drew about even in chips with Jivkov at one point. But Pellegrino had to accept a consolation prize, worth \$117,199.

Jivkov's victory gives him his very first WSOP title, to go along with 10 cashes on the WSOP Circuit, and \$136,000 in previous earnings. Indeed, Jivkov got the ring, and then the bracelet.

Among the more notable names that finished in the top 20 were -- Tommy Vedes (4th), Daniel Negreanu (5th), Thom Werthman (10th), Steve Brecher (12th), Nam Le (16th), and John Juanda (18th).

Nick Jivkov becomes the fifth player to win a gold bracelet at this year's WSOP.

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MEET NEW WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION – NICK JIVKOV

Name: Nick Jivkov

Birthplace: Bulgaria

Childhood: Immigrated to the U.S. at the age of 12

Current Residence: Des Plaines, Illinois (USA)

Age: 34

Marital Status: Married

Children: 2 (two daughters, ages 6 and 2)

Education: Attended Devry Technical Institute (computer science)

Profession: Semi-Pro Poker Player and Business Owner (Transportation Company)

Number of WSOP Cashes: 1 (10 WSOP Circuit cashes – 1 gold ring)

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 1

Number of WSOP gold bracelet victory (with this tournament): 1

Best Previous WSOP finish: None (winner of a WSOP Circuit gold ring in 2010, at IP Biloxi)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$189,818 (\$326,222 with WSOP Circuit earnings included)

Amazing Fact: Jivkov experienced what he calls a terrible WSOP in 2011. This year, just hours after landing in Las Vegas, Jivkov came to the Rio and entered a \$235 Deep-Stack tournament. He won about \$14,000. The next day, he entered gold bracelet Event #5, and won that, as well.

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WINNER QUOTES (POST-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW)

On running a business full time and playing poker: We do semi-truck deliveries all over the country. I started off with one truck, then I got a couple more, and before you knew it I had 40 trucks. I had a pretty big transportation company. It was a good business, but that's not where my heart was. My heart was playing cards. It was just way, way, way too stressful for me. I didn't enjoy myself. So probably, around 2008, I decided to size down my company and now I only operate about four or five trucks. Just enough for me to make a good living for myself. The rest of the time I'm just traveling the Circuit and just getting better at this game.

On his game plan entering this year's WSOP: Well, I had a really bad WSOP last year. I was here for 50 days straight. I could not cash in anything. I was running terrible. I left here feeling pretty devastated and so now when I came

the second time, I told myself I am not staying for the whole duration. I'm going to stay here for 10 days. I had a plan. I decided my very first event was going to be the \$235 Deep Stack Tournament you guys have here at the Rio, and that was going to be my little warm-up event. And the second event was going to be this event that I just won. And then a couple of other \$1,500 events.

On winning both tournaments he's enter so far at this WSOP: As soon as I landed from the plane, I played the \$235 and I ended up winning that. We made a deal at the end, and I ended up taking home about \$14,000. I was feeling good and I couldn't decide whether I was going to play the Venetian (\$400 event) or the WSOP \$1,500 Pot Limit Hold 'em. Thing is, Pot Limit Hold 'Em is kind of a slow game. I was just on the fence, but I'm like, "You know what? I did end up winning this one, maybe I'm on a heater and I think I'm going to do good." I just felt good this summer and I said, "I'm going to go play that." I asked my friend, "What would you have me play?" and he said, "Just go play the bracelet event. It's a bracelet, right?" I found myself in the \$1,500 and now here we are. I won the bracelet! It's pretty amazing!

On what it felt like to play at a WSOP final table for the first time: To be honest with you, I found myself much more composed and much more patient and not nervous than what I was expecting. I woke up after three hours of sleep, the adrenaline was just pumping and this is my first WSOP cash. I've cashed a bunch in the WSOP Circuit events, I have a circuit ring in multiple events, multiple main event final tables. And my best course so far was a fifth-place final table in the Chicago Circuit, for \$62,000 or so. I expected to be a lot more nervous standing here in the main stage of WSOP playing for a bracelet. As the game started off maybe I was a tad bit nervous, I wasn't getting any hands and then as I started building up a chip stack and I started busting people one by one. I started getting a lot more confident. I got a lot more calm and towards the end when the heads up play began I had a lot of confidence in myself, a lot of confidence in my game. So, I felt confident, I felt this thing was mine. I just knew it. I believe at that point I had a 4-to-1 chip lead. I did not underestimate my opponent, Pellegrino. I did some research on him. I know he's one of the toughest heads up players. He's a heads up professional online. He's got over \$2 million in earnings. I knew this was going to be a very tough match. When we were down three handed, I secretly was hoping that he was the one that got knocked out. He was very tough, I had him in multiple times as you guys witnessed and he came back and I kept on doubling him up, I believe three or four times. But then I just kept chipping away and I knew this thing was mine. I think I played pretty well.

On having a big star like Daniel Negreanu at the final table and possible distractions: I think overall it's a good thing. Any time you have a superstar at a final table, it brings more learners to the game, it brings more fans, it brings more exposure. Not only to him, but also to everybody else that's playing the final table. Could he distract from you getting a lot of attention? Definitely. But when you end up winning the thing you still end up getting the attention. So, you know, it's not a bad thing. I think it's a very good thing. Speaking of that, as I told PokerNews earlier, on the first day I was reading PokerNews about Table #6 which was the killer's row. There was Phil Ivey, Gavin Smith, Shannon Shorr, just a bunch of aces. They had a total combined of nine bracelets and \$36 million of earnings on that table. I'm like, "Wow. How do you get a \$1,500 event and match up that table randomly? That's crazy. Who's the unlucky dude that's going to end up sitting at that table?" And that unlucky dude was ME! Three levels into it and they break my table and I look at my seat number and I'm 6-6 and at that point, I had \$4,400 in chips, the average was about \$7,000-8,000. I went into that table, I was like: "I'm going to play my game. These guys are the best of the best but I'm going to hold my own, I have a lot of confidence in my game." Within two levels I had over \$40,000 in chips. The night was over, all those guys were out and I was still standing, so I felt great. I think it boosted my confidence up. I think I can play with the best.

On what the gold bracelet means: Oh my God. That's a tough question, because there's only a few people in my personal life to know how hard I work at this game. My wife, my soul mate, my number one supporter has always been behind me. She has always had my back through thick and thin and always believed in me, that I can do something in this game. My father and my mom have always had my back. This has been 15 years in the working. I started playing poker way before money making or way before the blow up. There wasn't even any No Limit. I probably started playing poker in the casinos when I was 18 years old -- and I'm 34 years old now. I've been working really, really hard on my game and to finally win a bracelet, and my first one by the way, because I think there's more to come and maybe some even this summer. It's just surreal. I can't explain it. It's an amazing feeling.

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THE FINAL TABLE

The final table was comprised of the top nine finishers.

The only former gold bracelet winner at the final table was Daniel Negreanu.

Final table players came from three nations – the United States (7 players), the U.K. (1 player), and Canada (1 player).

Final table participants ranged in age from 25 to 54.

The runner up was Bryan Pellegrino, from Austin, TX. He is a 25-year-old professional poker player. Pellegrino lived in Europe for three years. He started two successful businesses and made his first million by the age of 22 (in business). He's also starting to accumulate a nice poker bankroll, with \$300,000 in WSOP earnings. Pellegrino has cashed in each of the last two WSOP Main Events – finishing 143rd in 2010 and 158th in 2011. He also made the top eight in the \$10,000 buy-in Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em championship, in 2010.

Jonathan Aquiar, from Las Vegas, NV, was the third-place finisher.

Tommy Vedes, the Cyprus-born poker pro now living in Las Vegas, finished fourth. This was his 18th WSOP cash. He was 19th in the 2009 Main Event. Vedes also holds two World Poker Tour titles.

Daniel Negreanu, originally from Toronto, Ontario (Canada), took fifth place. He is a four-time gold bracelet winner, who made his 52nd career cash. Negreanu's last win was in 2008. Since then, he's had 2nd, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 5th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th place finishes.

Mike Allis ended up in sixth place. He is retired at age 54 and lives in Post Falls, ID. Allis now has 17 WSOP cashes.

Brant Hale came in seventh place. He is a 28-year-old investor from Moore, OK. This was WSOP cash number five for Hale.

John Eames, from the U.K., was eighth. He made his ninth WSOP cash with this showing.

Peter Tabali, a 31-year-old poker pro from Seattle, WA, took ninth. This was his first time to finish in the money at the WSOP.

Final table play began at 2:00 pm and lasted until 9:30 pm. The duration was about 7.5 hours.

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OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top 72 finishers collected prize money.

Tournament results are to be entered into all official records as an open event. Results are also to be included in the 2012 "WSOP Player of the Year" race.

Multiple former WSOP gold bracelet winners cashed in this event. Perhaps the most noteworthy in-the-money finish was John Juanda, who took 18th place. This was WSOP cash number 60 for the five-time gold bracelet winner.

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ODDS AND ENDS

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #5, since it's the fifth gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Wednesday at noon and concluding Friday night at 9:30 pm.

The tournament attracted 639 entries. This number is down from last year, when there were 765 entrants.

The official WSOP gold bracelet ceremony takes place on the day following the winner's victory (or some hours later when the tournament end very late). The ceremony takes place inside Brasilia. 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 public and media. Members of the public and media are permitted to shoot photos and video of the ceremony.

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EVENT HISTORY

Pot-Limit poker made its WSOP debut in 1984, when two Pot-Limit Omaha tournaments were offered. There were no Pot-Limit tournaments of any kind played at the WSOP from 1970 through 1983.

The only Pot-Limit game that was played at the WSOP between 1984 and 1991 was Pot-Limit Omaha. At the time, Pot-Limit Hold'em action was restricted to cash games.

The first Pot-Limit Hold'em tournament at the WSOP took place in 1992. The game has been a fixture on the WSOP schedule ever since, with multiple tournaments offered.

Remarkably, no player has ever won more than one WSOP gold bracelet in Pot-Limit Hold'em. There are now 49 players with exactly one gold bracelet (each) in this form of poker.

The player with the most career WSOP cashes in Pot-Limit Hold'em events at the WSOP is Jason Lester with nine. Chris "Jesus" Ferguson, T.J. Cloutier, and Ken Flaton each have eight.

Chris Viox was last year's winner. He did not cash in this year's tournament.

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TOURNAMENT PLAY

The tournament officially began on Wednesday, May 30th, at noon. The tournament officially ended on June 1st, at 9:30 pm.

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2012 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:
United States (5): Chip Saechao, Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:
United States (3): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Zeidman
Thailand (1): Chip Saechao
Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of winners has been:
Florida (2): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman
California (1): Chip Saechao
Nevada (1): Brent Hanks
Illinois (1): Nick Jivkov

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 (2): Brent Hanks, Leif Force

Semi-Pros (2): Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov

Amateurs (1): Chip Saechao

The streak of male gold bracelet winners is currently at 224 consecutive events, and counting. Aside from the annual Ladies Poker Championship (a non-open event), the last female to win an open WSOP event was Vanessa Selbst, back in 2008. The longest cold streak for female players had previously been 221 consecutive open events, which took place between 1982 and 1996.

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

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