



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

**Official Report  
Event #21  
No-Limit Hold'em  
Buy-In: \$1,000  
Number of Entries: 2,799  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$2,519,100  
Number of Places Paid: 297  
First Place Prize: \$440,829  
June 10-12, 2012**

## **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES**

Michael Gathy – the 2,798 to 1 Shot

Belgian Wins First WSOP Gold Bracelet in Second WSOP Entry Ever

Belgian Online Poker Pro Tops Huge Field of 2,799 Players and Wins WSOP Gold Bracelet, Plus \$440,829.

21 Gold Bracelets Won – 40 More at Stake!

## **TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW**

Walking into the World Series of Poker tournament that began last Sunday was like taking the first step in what everyone knew would be a lengthy marathon.

The odds against winning were overwhelming, indeed. Like, thousands to one.

Not only that, the test would prove to be grueling both physically and mentally. Playing tournament poker at the highest level over a 36-hour period during which the objective was to accumulate every single chip initially dispersed amongst 300 or so poker tables seemed like an impossibility.

For Michael Gathy, it was no problem whatsoever.

The 23-year-old professional poker player from Brussels, Belgium rose high above the second-largest tournament field of the year (to date). He was the last player sitting at the conclusion of a very long game, the man with every single chip from that first day comfortably nestled in neat rows, stacked like chocolate bars, beaming with pride at the realization he had just etched his name into the annals of poker history.

Gathy's victory is all the more impressive and defiant of the odds when you consider that midway through the final table, he doubled up poker pro Eric Baldwin in a pivotal hand and was left with just a handful of chips. Armed with almost no ammunition at a final table with some tough competition, Gathy still managed to pull off the come from behind win.

Gathy won his first WSOP gold bracelet in the \$1,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament (Event #21), collecting \$440,829 in the process. Nearly half a million dollars for three days trapped inside the Rio tournament room -- or 440 times his original investment. Not a bad deal, at all. He topped a massive field totaling 2,799 entrants, ultimately winning poker's most coveted prize late on the third and final day of competition.

The final hand was a breeze for Gathy. He was dealt pocket tens against the ultimate runner-up, Jamie Armstrong, holding pocket nines. The higher pocket pair held up and a Belgian was suddenly the latest poker champion.

The top 297 finishers collected prize money. The final table of nine included two gold bracelet winners – John Esposito, a.k.a. “Espo” and Eric Baldwin. Also of note was Martin Staszko’s in-the-money finish (116th). He was the runner-up in last year’s WSOP Main Event Championship. This was his first time to cash since that time. Another notable casher was John Duthie (195th place). He is one of the founders of the European Poker Tour.

Gathy’s victory gives him his first WSOP title in what was his first time ever to cash at the WSOP. He also becomes only the second champion ever from the nation of Belgium. The first Belgian winner was Davidi Katai, who won the \$2,000 buy-in Pot-Limit Hold’em event back in 2008.

Alas, many people know Belgium for beer and chocolates. After tonight, it shall also be known for producing multiple WSOP gold bracelet winners.

## **MEET THE LATEST WSOP CHAMPION – MICHAEL GATHY**

Name: Michael Gathy

Birthplace: Brussels, Belgium (USA)

Age: 23

Childhood: Belgium

Current Residence: Brussels (Belgium)

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Education: Attended college and studied medicine (but did not graduate)

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 1

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 1

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

Best Previous WSOP finish: None (only his second tournament to enter)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$440,829

## **WINNER QUOTES (POST-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW)**

**Question:** Tell us more about where you grew up?

**Gathy:** I really don’t know what to say. I grew up in Brussels with my mother and brother.

**Question:** Did you go to school?

**Gathy:** I went to school in Brussels to study medicine, but I stopped to play poker.

**Question:** Did you play in many tournaments in Europe?

**Gathy:** Yes, like 20 or so.

**Question:** Do you live in an apartment or house?

**Gathy:** I live in an apartment

**Question:** Do you play a lot of online poker?

**Gathy:** Yes, I am mostly exclusive online.

**Question:** Is this your first time at the World Series of Poker

**Gathy:** Yes, this is my first time to play and first time in Vegas

**Question:** *How many tournaments have you played this year?*

**Gathy:** This is my second tournament.

**Question:** *So are you going to do with the \$400,000 you won?*

**Gathy:** It's \$440,000.

**Question:** *(Laughter) Sorry, you know the exact amount?*

**Gathy:** Yes, and don't short me (laughter).

**Question:** *What do you think you'll do with the money?*

**Gathy:** I will probably invest it in a house or apartment.

**Question:** *You'll just play more poker too?*

**Gathy:** Oh, yes of course.

**Question:** *So obviously, you have had some success overseas, does it mean anything extra to win a title here in Las Vegas?*

**Gathy:** Yes of course, it means a lot. The World Series of Poker is such a big event that it means a lot to me.

**Question:** *Was there any time during the final table where you thought this was your tournament to win?*

**Gathy:** I don't worry too much about getting low in chips. I thought I was going to win it when I was three-handed and I got up and started playing evenly for the final three. I thought I was going to win it.

**Question:** You are the second champion from Belgium, do you know the other winner -- Davidi Katai?

**Gathy:** Of course I know him. Not personally but I do know of him. I have never talked to him.

**Question:** *Do poker players from Belgium look up to him. Is he very famous?*

**Gathy:** Yes, definitely he is the most famous poker person.

**Question:** *Now, you are the second most famous?*

**Gathy:** (laughter) Maybe. I think so. I hope.

**Question:** *I see you have the Belgium flag on your short. Are you very proud of Belgium?*

**Gathy:** Of course, only a few players have been successful from Belgium, so yes I am very proud.

**Question:** *So are you going to be a big deal when you go back home? Are you going to be the Joe Hachem of Belgium?*

**Gathy:** I hope not (laughter).

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #21, since it's the 21<sup>st</sup> gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Sunday at noon and concluding on late Tuesday night.

The final table began at 6 p.m. and ended at 2 a.m.

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 p.m. The national anthem of the winner's nation is played. The entire presentation is open to public and media. Video and photography is permitted by both public and members of the media.

## **2012 WSOP STATISTICS**

Through the conclusion of Event #21, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (16): Chip Saechao, Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Phil Hellmuth, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl

France (1): Aubin Cazals

Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov

Canada (1): Ashkan Razavi

The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit

Belgium (1): Michael Gathy

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

United States (15): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenger, Phil Hellmuth, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl

Thailand (1): Chip Saechao

Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov

France (1): Aubin Cazals

Iran (1): Ashkan Razavi

The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit

Belgium (1): Michael Gathy

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of (American) winners has been:

California (3): Chip Saechao, John Monnette, Phil Hellmuth

Pennsylvania (3): Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Ben Scholl

Nevada (2): Brent Hanks, Andy Bloch

Florida (2): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman

New York (2): Matt Matros, Andy Frankenger

Illinois (1): Nick Jivkov

Alabama (1): Herbert Tapscott

Ohio (1): Adam Friedman

Washington (1): Brandon Schaefer

Maryland (1): Cliff Goldkind

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 (14): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Andy Bloch, Aubin Cazals, John Monnette, Ashkan Razavi, Vincent van der Fluit, Brian Hastings, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenger, Phil Hellmuth, Michael Gathy

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

Amateurs (5): Chip Saechao, Herbert Tapscott, David "Doc" Arsht, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl

The streak of consecutive male gold bracelet winners (or put another way – no female winner) is currently at 240 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.

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

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*For official news and the latest updates from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: [WSOP.com](http://WSOP.com)*

*For statistics and historical information from the 2012 World Series of Poker, contact Nolan Dalla at: [nolandalla@aol.com](mailto:nolandalla@aol.com)*

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