



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

**Official Report  
Event #36  
No-Limit Hold'em Shootout  
Buy-In: \$3,000  
Number of Entries: 587  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,602,510  
Number of Places Paid: 60  
First Place Prize: \$368,593  
June 19-21, 2012**

## **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES**

Craig McCorkell Wins First WSOP Gold Bracelet

U.K.'s Craig McCorkell Wins \$3,000 Buy-In No-Limit Hold'em Shootout (Event #36)

English Poker Pro Collects \$368,593 in Prize Money

Two Stunning Final Table Comebacks – Best Finale of the Year?

Antonio “the Magician” Esfandiari Ends with Heartbreaking Third-Place Finish

Most Exciting Final Table of 2012 Includes Wild Gallery of Spectators – U.K. versus Brazil

## **TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW**

Craig McCorkell won the most recent championship event played at the 2012 World Series of Poker. He overcame 586 other players en route to his first major tournament victory, which took place in the No-Limit Hold'em Shootout (Event #36).

The landmark victory paid \$368,593 in prize money. McCorkell also collected the coveted WSOP gold bracelet, the most prestigious prize in the game.

But a huge six-figure score and a gold bracelet were mere exclamation points to what was unquestionably the most entertaining and exciting final table of the entire 2012 WSOP -- which is really a bold claim considering the stellar lineups that have starred at the 36 events that have been completed up to this point.

In fact, McCorkell's victory was as memorable as it was shocking. At one point late in the tournament when play was down to three-handed, former gold bracelet winner and poker superstar Antonio “the Magician” Esfandiari held about 80 percent of the total chips in play. It appeared that the two underdogs – McCorkell and Jeremiah Fitzpatrick (who ended up finishing second) -- were positioning themselves to hold on long enough to jump up into second place -- a money leap worth nearly \$80,000.

Then, the most stunning turn of events so far at this year's WSOP took place when Esfandiari not only lost the chip lead, he was ultimately knocked out of the tournament. All it took was three brutal hands for “the Magician” to disappear from the ESPN Main Stage.

No doubt, the turning point of grand finale came when Esfandiari held pocket nines. He had one of his opponents (Fitzpatrick) all in and drawing as a huge dog – holding pocket sevens. Fitzpatrick needed a miracle.

*Ka-boom!*

A *seven* flopped, igniting a temporary comeback for Fitzpatrick which was orchestrated in perfect unison with a monumentally painful fall for Esfandiari.

Five minutes later, Esfandiari was toast. Burned toast. At that instant, and spectators were packed five deep on the rail and Esfandiari received a nice ovation as the wounded ex-champion, it seemed almost a foregone conclusion that this would become Jeremiah Fitzpatrick's first WSOP victory. When heads-up play commenced, Fitzpatrick enjoyed a 3 to 1 chip lead. Perhaps more importantly, the part-time poker player from North Carolina was on an emotional and financial free roll, just one player away from a thrilling triumph on poker's grandest stage.

But that one player in the way was a human roadblock named Craig McCorkell, who (before this night) was in the midst of what can best be described as a state of poker purgatory. Alas, there was nothing in McCorkell's record or background that indicated he was about to become the latest gold bracelet winner. Two min-cashes this year and about \$14,000 in winnings in eight events played. Zero for 12 in events entered last year. A grand total of about \$40,000 in WSOP earnings for his lifetime.

From that moment forward, it seemed a switch was flipped. The electricity that had powered Fitzpatrick's stunning comeback suddenly blacked out, just as McCorkell's prospects began to light up. In fact, McCorkell proceeded to give Fitzpatrick a taste of his own medicine -- and that taste would be very bitter indeed. Over the course of the next half-hour, McCorkell completely reversed the chip positions -- one hand at a time. The 26-year-old Brit from West Sussex had a commanding chip lead when the final fateful hand was dealt as the large and boisterous crowd rose to its feet in a drunken haze of anticipation.

McCorkell ended up making a pair of eights on the final hand of the tournament, which raked in the last pot of the night. Oddly enough, the final board was an inappropriately anti-climatic swan song of a thrilling final table that included eight full hours of ecstasy, tragedy, jubilation, and heartbreak.

Yet, the ten player-finalists were just part of the story. The final table was the wildest of any event, thus far -- due mostly to the crowd. Large mobs of Brazilian and British poker players and fans camped out on opposite sides of the arena, cheering for players from their respective country. The atmosphere resembled championship soccer match, with constant singing, chanting, and merriment.

The Brits certainly got their wish -- a victory for their fellow countryman. The heavily-accented fish and chip eaters finally got to witness the first U.K. winner of the 2012 WSOP, no doubt a long overdue victory. McCorkell obliged the shining moment and the support his adoring fans had given by leaping from his chair, dashing over the rail filled with the swarm, and embracing the entire gallery in one fell swoop, which behaved as though England had just won the World Cup.

If not the poker moment of the year, it was most certainly one of the WSOP's most thrilling moments. Craig McCorkell got to enjoy the biggest celebration of all, as the newest WSOP gold bracelet champion.

Even a disappointed third-place finisher Antonio Esfandiari would likely agree -- this moment was magical.

## **MEET THE LATEST WSOP CHAMPION – CRAIG MCCORKELL**

Name: Craig McCorkell

Birthplace: Haywardes, U.K.

Current Residence: West Sussex, U.K.

Profession: Professional Poker Player (4 years)

Previous Occupation: College Student

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Number of WSOP Cashes: 5

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 1

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

Best Previous WSOP finish: 26<sup>th</sup> (2010)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$407,776

## AN INTERVIEW WITH THE WINNER

**Question:** *When you were playing three-handed, you had the lowest chip stack. Did you ever imagine that you'd be here an hour later as the winner?*

**McCorkell:** Yeah. I mean, I was down to 10 big blinds at one point, three-handed. But there's only 5.2 million in play, and I still had 700,000. And Antonio did have run bad, especially when he lost nines versus sevens to have all the chips going into heads up basically. But I was still aware that anything could happen three-handed. And I had a good chance.

**Question:** *This was probably the most exciting table we've had in terms of the rail. Did that help you or distract you?*

**McCorkell:** Obviously it's awesome. There was an incident with a couple of people getting kicked out of here, but whatever. There was not one single person at the final, when we were ten-handed, complaining about the noise of anything. Everyone was enjoying it. It was good banter between everyone. There was nothing bad going on. It was really good. It added to the atmosphere of the final, for sure.

**Question:** *What's next for you now?*

**McCorkell:** Yeah. Nothing's going to change. Just going to play every single event left and just try to get another bracelet I guess.

**Question:** *Can you tell us a little bit about your background before you came to poker?*

**McCorkell:** I started playing poker at university. I dropped out of university four and half years ago now to play poker professionally. And, yeah, just been playing tournaments for the past couple of years, after playing cash before that. And, yeah, just kind of culminated in this.

**Question:** *I know you guys got everything worked out, but on the stream there was kind of some confusion when you guys stopped to talk a little bit about the deal. Can you talk about what happened there?*

**McCorkell:** No, there's nothing. We just stopped. I just wanted to clear something up that was on the stream. But we sorted it out off the stream, and it was fine. There was nothing wrong. All three of us that were left sorted it out, and we agreed to something. So, that was fine.

**Question:** *What was your game plan earlier today?*

**McCorkell:** We started ten-handed, so I did play a bit tight when it was ten-handed. But we lost two people real fast. And I thought laddering was important today. I tried and get three-handed to give myself a chance. I'm really confined in my heads up game, so when I got heads up, I felt really, really confident.

**Question:** *What was your goal coming into the WSOP?*

**McCorkell:** I come into every tournament with the possibility of winning it. Last year, I played something like 12 tournaments here and didn't cash one single tournament. But the year before, I did much better. And I just came into this year feeling good again, just as normal, hoping to do well.

**Question:** *You said you played 12 last year. How many have you played this year?*

**McCorkell:** World Series events -- probably this is like my eighth, maybe my ninth.

**Question:** *Who do you want to give a shout out to, poker-wise or personal-wise?*

**McCorkell:** One of both. My girlfriend has been incredibly supportive. She is coming out tomorrow. It's a shame she didn't come out today and was here for today. But I spoke to her straight after I won. Her name is Laura Mackenzie. And Toby Lewis is one of my really good friends in poker. And he's been really supportive to me. And he is one of my really good friends in poker and one of my really good friends. So, he's been supportive and great. And it definitely contributed to today's success

## ODDS AND ENDS

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #36, since it's the 36<sup>th</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 Tuesday at noon and concluding on Thursday night at midnight.

The total duration of the final table was about nine hours.

The final table included two former gold bracelet winners – Antonio Esfandiari (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Athanasios Polychronopoulos (5<sup>th</sup>).

The runner-up was Jeremiah Fitzpatrick, a 31-year-old financial planner from Charlotte, NC.

This finale had the most shocking conclusion of any gold bracelet event played so far in 2012. When play was at three-handed, Antonio “the Magician” Esfandiari had about 80 percent of the chips in play. However, he lost part of his stack on a brutal beat and in just three hands went from chip leader to the third-place finish.

McCorkell overcame a 3 to 1 chip disadvantage when playing heads up versus Jeremiah Fitzpatrick. The duel lasted only about 35 minutes.

Among the notable players who finished in the money were – former gold bracelet winners Chance Kornuth, Matt Jarvis, David “Bakes” Baker, and Steve Billirakis.

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 #36, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (27): 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 Frankengerger, Phil Hellmuth, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Brian Meinders, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David “Bakes” Baker, Max Steinberg, Chris Tryba  
Canada (3): Ashkan Razavi, Simon Charette, Timothy Adams  
France (1): Aubin Cazals  
Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov  
The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit  
Belgium (1): Michael Gathy  
Japan (1): Naoya Kihara  
Great Britain (1): Craig McCorkell

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

United States (26): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David “Doc” Arsht, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankengerger, Phil Hellmuth, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Brian Meinders, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David “Bakes” Baker, Max Steinberg, Chris Tryba  
Canada (2): Simon Charette, Timothy Adams  
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  
Japan (1): Naoya Kihara  
Great Britain (1): Craig McCorkell

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of the 27 American winners has been:

Nevada (8): Brent Hanks, Andy Bloch, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David “Bakes” Baker, Chris Tryba  
California (4): Chip Saechao, John Monnette, Phil Hellmuth, Max Steinberg  
Pennsylvania (3): Brian Hastings, David “Doc” Arsht, Ben Scholl  
Florida (2): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman  
New York (2): Matt Matros, Andy Frankengerger  
Texas (2): Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright  
Alabama (1): Herbert Tapscott  
Ohio (1): Adam Friedman  
Washington (1): Brandon Schaefer

Maryland (1): Cliff Goldkind  
New Jersey (1): Brian Meinders  
Oklahoma (1): Gabe Scott

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 (27): 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 Frankenberger, Phil Hellmuth, Randy Ohel, Michael Gathy, Simon Charette, Joe Cassidy, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz, Timothy Adams, Larry Wright, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Max Steinberg, Naoya Kihara, Chris Tryba, Craig McCorkell

Semi-Pros (4): Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov, Brian Meinders, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman

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

*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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