



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

**Official Report
Event #43
No-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In: \$1,500
Number of Entries: 2,770
Total Net Prize Pool: \$3,739,500
Number of Places Paid: 297
First Place Prize: \$654,380
June 23-25, 2012**

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

Henry Lu Wins First WSOP Gold Bracelet

22-Year-Old Brooklyn Poker Pro Collects \$654,380

Longtime Suffering British Poker Pro Neil Channing Takes Second

Lu-Channing Heads-Up Match One of 2012 WSOP Highlights

TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

“Henry Lu’s Ecstasy and Neil Channing’s Agony”

This is the story of a comeback and a tragedy.

It is the story of a thrilling moment of triumph and the shattering devastation of defeat.

It is the story of pleasure. It is the story of pain.

This is the story of Henry Lu and Neil Channing, who squared off in an epic heads-up duel in the most recent championship event at the 2012 World Series of Poker. The marvelous and miraculous story of how these two men – so utterly different in just about every way – came to face each other heads-up in the showdown of all poker showdowns.

Channing has been around the British poker scene for what seems like an eternity. Unquestionably the most beloved, yet long-suffering English poker player on record, Channing has watched virtually everyone around him win major poker titles and WSOP gold bracelets. On most of these historic occasions, Channing was right there sitting in the front row, clapping and cheering the loudest. Utterly selfless and overly generous, Channing is an old-school poker player with personal characteristics and defining qualities that in some ways makes him the envy of the poker world.

Twenty years his opponent’s junior, Lu grew up thousands of miles from Channing’s London flat, in the Brooklyn asphalt jungle, called Bensonhurst. Also unlike Channing, Lu’s fondness for the game and skill as a player stemmed largely from his experiences playing online. Since Lu was not old enough to play in a live casino, he spent much of his time playing poker on the Internet. Indeed, if Channing was the live poker ying, then Lu was the online poker yang. These two polar opposites should never have met anywhere close to a final table, let alone played heads-up for a WSOP title.

Consider this: early on the third and final day of the tournament, there were 11 players remaining – two spots away from the official final table of nine. Lu appeared to be destined for an 11th place finish. Had he actually finished 11th in this tournament, there would have been no shame or embarrassment. In fact, Lu would have been relatively pleased with his accomplishment, outlasting 2,760 other poker players and collecting \$37,657 (11th-place prize money). Lu wasn't just low on chips and close to elimination. He practically had one foot out the door and a key in the ignition of the rental car. Lu was down to barely more than two big blinds in his stack.

If the poker expression, “a chip and a chair” originated with the late great former world champ Jack Straus, then Lu's updated version of the concept would most certainly be “a big blind and a chair.” Lu managed to win that crucial all-in moment, when his pocket sevens held up against ace-jack. Lu doubled up. He doubled up again. Then, a short time later, he doubled up again -- and again. Perhaps Rome wasn't built in a day, but Lu's chip castle was most certainly constructed in a period of about two hours.

And while all this was going on, while Lu was making a fantastic comeback, Channing could not have possibly cared less. And why should he have cared or been worried? Channing was rolling along like a steamroller, absolutely pulverizing everything in path, inching close to that first gold bracelet victory each time a chair was yanked and more chips found a new home in the portly possession of Channing.

So, these two men arrived at the final table, which was played on a Monday evening in front of a packed gallery of spectators. Over the course of the next several hours, Lu played tournament poker in a manner well beyond what anyone could have possibly expected given his relatively brief WSOP resume and live-action playing experience.

If Lu's survival instincts were impressive, then Channing's mastery of playing the super stack was awe-inspiring. No one at the table got a break. If he had an opponent in a proverbial choke hold, the next move was to snap the poor victim's neck. If the disadvantaged adversary was on the ground, symbolically speaking, Channing was the one pushing the mop removing the human debris, cleaning off the grand stage for what he hoped would eventually become a British victory celebration.

Channing had every right to feel confident – perhaps even overly so. Everything was going perfectly. He held a big chip lead. When the heads-up showdown was finally reached at about 10 p.m., many observers looked upon the two men at the final table in the manner that a coronation was about to take place. Lu had already “won” in a sense, managing to take a single blind at one point and rocket his stack up to at least second-place prize money. No one could have possibly foreseen – not Lu and certainly not Channing -- that this would turn into the blood-match of the 2012 WSOP.

For all of Lu's obvious disadvantages against Channing – less high-limit experience, a 3 to 1 chip disparity, and perhaps even less hunger to win – he did enjoy one huge edge. And that edge could be defined in one simple word – pressure.

Lu had none of it, Channing had all of it. Lu had no pressure on him whatsoever to win. He wasn't supposed to be there. He wasn't supposed to be sitting at the final table. And, he certainly wasn't supposed to be heads-up playing for a gold bracelet. By contrast the weight of the world was on the shoulders of Channing. He wasn't carrying a wheelbarrow. Channing was hauling a quarry.

Indeed, Lu was on a giant emotional and financial freeroll. He vowed to have a good time and enjoy his first experience at a WSOP final table. This is not to say that Lu took things lightly nor did he play recklessly. To the contrary, he played near-flawless poker for the next four hours, perhaps even finding talent and skills that he never knew existed.

No one would dare suggest that having a big chip lead or being within a hand of victory is a disadvantage. But there's something inherently uncomfortable about having everything be so, so close, with everyone in the world watching, and waiting for that elusive moment of victory. Channing didn't just want to win for Neil's sake. He wanted to win for them. All of them.

Channing played an extraordinary match. He committed no discernible mistakes. In fact, if Channing had the chance to play out all his hands again in a rematch, most would have said he'd play them the same way.

But if Channing played a great match, then Lu played a brilliant one. Down by a 9 to 2 margin on two occasions, the fearless Brooklynite never panicked. He never tilted. He picked just the right spots each time when he committed his entire stack and – on each of those key occasions – he had slightly the best of it against the tenacious Englishman.

The grueling duel slowly took its toll. From the look on Channing's face, he seemed to sense everything was slowly slipping away. And, there was absolutely nothing he could do about it. Four hours after the showdown began, Lu had seized the chip lead by a small margin.

The final hand of the tournament was dealt when Lu flopped over 4-4 against Channing's A-J suited. The two players would essentially race for a gold bracelet. The next 45 seconds would determine the new poker champion.

As if the poker gods wanted to tempt, tease and ultimately torture poor Channing a little while longer, the evasive savior card that could have catapulted him to poker bliss did not come.

A mob of at least a dozen supporters stormed across the big stage and mobbed their colleague. One half of the stage was complete bedlam. Hugging. Cheering. Celebration. The other half of the stage resembled a funeral. Alas, dreams of victory had died a painful death – at least for now.

Channing's supporters sat in stunned silence. A deafening echo of cheers rang through the gallery filling the cavernous void that was in the hearts of the Channingites. All they could do was watch helplessly, no doubt searching for the solace that could bandage the wound of a man they loved and respected.

It was a party that many thought should have been Channing's. Meanwhile, the disbelieving Londoner continued to sit at that table. He sat and sat. He waited. Utterly dejected, Channing could not bear to look anywhere in particular – not at the opposite site of the arena engulfed in jubilant celebration, and certainly not at his supporters, who he must have felt were utterly let down by what they saw. Channing continued in his state of trance. Looking straight ahead. Blindsided. It was as though he was waiting for something to happen, anything to happen, some miracle – a stretcher perhaps – that could instantly transport him out of this utter hell of disappointment.

As the celebration gradually faded and quieted, Channing finally stood up from his seat. He looked ahead, trying desperately to find the path of least resistance, searching for the avenue that could ease the pain of defeat. But for Channing, that street did not exist. There was but one path to take, and the walk of defeat was a painful one.

The portraits of ecstasy and agony were emblazoned in the memories of everyone who was here on this night to witness a one comeback and one tragedy. The culmination of the great comeback was a glimmering cylinder of gold. Photographs were taken. Interviews were conducted. Then, there was even more celebration.

As all this was happening, just over the massive crowd swarming around the latest WSOP winner, Channing shuffled away slowly in dead silence, hopelessly consoled by the only people on this Earth who could share and empathize with the heartbreaking disappointment. Channing tottered past the gallery. Slowly, they began to clap. They began to cheer.

Then, the cheers grew louder, and louder.

They knew a champion when they saw one.

Henry Lu Wins \$1,500 Buy-In No-Limit Hold'em (Event #43): 22-Year-Old New Yorker Wins First Gold Bracelet and \$654,380

The 2012 World Series of Poker is nearly two-thirds of the way complete. The energy and excitement of the globe's grandest gaming spectacle shows absolutely no signs of slowing down as yet another huge crowd turned out for the \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament, classified as Event #43.

Tournament newcomer Henry Lu added his name to this year's extraordinary list of gold bracelet champions after winning his first WSOP title tonight at the Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. He not only received the game's most coveted prize – the gold bracelet – but a whopping \$654,380 in prize money as well -- his biggest score ever.

The three-day competition drew another massive field. The tournament began with 2,770 entrants on Saturday and concluded on Monday night on the ESPN Main Stage in front of a large crowd and a worldwide WSOP.com live stream viewing audience.

The runner-up was the popular, but long-suffering British poker veteran Neil Channing, who barely missed the chance at what would have been his long-awaited first WSOP victory.

MEET THE LATEST WSOP CHAMPION – HENRY LU

Name: Henry Lu

Birthplace: Brooklyn, NY

Age: 22

Current Residence: Bensonhurst (Brooklyn, NY)

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Previous Occupation: Student

Education: Attended Syracuse University

Number of WSOP final-table appearances: 1

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

Best Previous WSOP finish: 56th (2011)

First-Place Prize Money: \$654,380

Total WSOP Earnings: \$669,938

Note: Lu will be classified as a professional poker player in WSOP records, since he does play full-time exclusively and has no other occupation.

INTERVIEW WITH THE WINNER – HENRY LU

Question: *Great match. What impressed a lot of people was that you never gave up. You could have said 'Alright I'm just going to shove with this.' But you never cracked. Talk about what you were thinking while you were playing as the dog most of the final table.*

Lu: While, I just kept my composure. It's good having friends there to talk to during breaks and stuff. To keep my head together but there are some points where I thought about just spewing all-in. I kept it, and waited for Ace-King and got a pretty lucky double up. And then from there, we were pretty even in stacks, we just played some poker.

Question: *It was interesting since you were sitting in the one seat and you could actually see your friends right in front of you where Neil had his back to his gallery. Did you get some inspiration from looking or were you so focused that you are not even thinking about that.*

Lu: No, I mean I play for fun. I always make faces at them and stuff, you know because it's not that serious. I mean, I am not that used to playing live where you see the person's face. If you see me play I almost never think, 'I know what I am going to do.'

Question: *Is this scene here, the stage, the lights, the Internet broadcast, and whatever -- is this what you expected the experience to be like?*

Lu: No, I actually hated the table. If you see me play I was on top of the table because you are playing with your hands like curled up like a T-Rex or something. I hated it -- that's why once I got heads-up my whole body was on top of the table and we were just playing after I'm there.

Question: *What does this win mean for you? What's your plan moving on from here?*

Lu: I'll keep playing poker. A World Series of Poker win has got to be a pinnacle of anybody's career. I am 22, so this is like my second series so, it's a good start, it's going good so far.

Question: *Can you tell us a little about your background? What you did before you got in to poker?*

Lu: Well, I played a lot in High School. But I was playing super small and throughout college I went to Syracuse University. I played a ton online and stuff and after Black Friday sucked but by then I was 21 and I started coming here to Las Vegas.

Question: *What did you want to be when you were going to school?*

Lu: I am really not really sure; I was pretty distracted, from poker. I was a Bio major because my parents wanted me to do that go to med-school.

Question: *Might that still be in your future or is this maybe is this going to be it for you?*

Lu: Oh yeah possibly -- but right now this is going well, so we'll stick to it.

Question: *It seemed like you really kicked it into action during the heads-up match. Did you have a specific plan against Neil Channing?*

Lu: Well, at first he was super aggressive – super, super aggressive. So, I tightened up a lot to try to take advantage of him over-playing a lot of his hands. Once I built up a big enough stack, I pretty much just leaned on him until he broke. He played really good. I got some pretty lucky key double-ups where he had Ace-Ten versus my Ace-King and the first hand I had Ace-Queen vs. his Ace-Jack you know, so he is not getting away. I got pretty lucky to be on the winning side.

Question: *With 11 players remaining, you had one big blind left. What were you thinking at the time?*

Lu: I was going to go out in 11th place, and I would have been happy. It's a nice score. But it's like, 'hey man,' now it's like, 'now you can just play a lot more care free.' So yeah, the pressure was off. I thought I was done already. Coming to the final table was already more than what I expected. It worked. One blind and a chair, that is all you need.

ODDS AND ENDS

This is the 1,001st gold bracelet to be awarded in WSOP history. It is also the 995th WSOP event in history.

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #43, since it's the 43rd gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Saturday at noon and concluding on Monday night.

The total duration of the final table was about 7 hours. Play began at 4 p.m. and ended at 11 pm.

The final table included no former gold bracelet winners.

The runner-up was Neil Channing, the long-suffering also-ran who has been one of the most dutiful ambassadors of the British poker scene for the past decade. Channing had the ultimate winner by a margin of 9 to 2 during head-up play on two occasions, but could not close out the victory.

James Mackey, from Las Vegas, finished in third place.

The top 297 finishers collected prize money. Among the former gold bracelet winners who cashed were Kevin Song, Carter Phillips, Robert Perry, William Heimiller, Andy Frankenger and others.

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

United States (32): 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 Frankenger, 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, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Dung "Gomer" Nguyen, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu

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

Germany (1): Jan-Peter Jachtmann

Ukraine (1): Okelsii Kovalchuk

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

United States (30): 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, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Brian Meinders, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Max Steinberg, Chris Tryba, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu

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

Vietnam (1): Dung "Gomer" Nguyen

Germany (1): Jan-Peter Jachtmann

Ukraine (1): Okelsii Kovalchuk

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of the 32 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

New York (4): Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu

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

Texas (3): Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright, David "ODB" Baker

Florida (2): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman

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

Kansas (1): Dung "Gomer" Nguyen

Massachusetts (1): Ronnie Bardah

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 (32): 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, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Greg Ostrander, Okelsii Kovalchuk, Henry Lu

Semi-Pros (5): Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov, Brian Meinders, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Jan-Peter Jachtman

Amateurs (6): Chip Saechao, Herbert Tapscott, David "Doc" Arsht, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Dung "Gomer" Nguyen

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

For official spectator photographs from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: www.imagemasterspoker.com

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