



2010 World Series of Poker Presented by Jack Link's Beef Jerky
Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada

Official Report
Event #14
Deuce-to-Seven Draw Lowball (No-Limit)
Buy-In: \$1,500
Number of Entries: 250
Total Net Prize Pool: \$337,500
Number of Places Paid: 26
First Place Prize: \$337,500
June 5-7, 2010

Tournament Headlines

Yan R. Chen Wins First WSOP Gold Bracelet

High Stakes Lowball Specialist Chen Collects \$92,817 in Prize Money

California Poker Pro Has the Lowdown on Lowball

New Deuce Lowball Tournament Draws Strong Crowd -- 250 Entrants

Overview

[Yan R. Chen](#) was the winner of the \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Deuce-to-Seven Draw Lowball event at the 2010 World Series of Poker. It marked his first career WSOP gold bracelet victory. The poker pro from Irvine, CA, collected \$92,817 for first place. This was Chen's third WSOP final table appearance within the past two years. He had a third-place finish in a similar Lowball event held last year, and a fifth-place showing in the Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split World Championship. In fact, he cashed four times last year.

Chen was born in China. He came to the United States to attend college, including Columbia Law School. He a 45-year-old married father of two boys. He started playing poker seriously about 12 years ago. Chen, who specialized in high-stakes lowball cash games in and around Los Angeles, has several cashes at various tournaments in California and Nevada. But this was his first major tournament victory.

This was the first \$1,500 buy-in Lowball tournament with the Deuce-to-Seven Draw variant

held at the WSOP. Turnout proved to be a success as there were 250 entries – a relatively large field given that this form of poker is rarely played inside most card rooms. Aside from the WSOP, there are virtually no Deuce-to-Seven Lowball events played anywhere – except a few of the mega-casinos in the Los Angeles area. Those games tend to be played for very high stakes – with Chen usually sitting in as one of the players.

The top 28 finishers collected prize money. The runner up was former WSOP gold bracelet winner Mike Wattel (1999 Omaha High-Low Split), from Mesa, AZ. Several former WSOP gold bracelet finishers cashed in this event, including Alexander Kravchenko (7th), Chris Bjorin (13th), Erik Seidel (14th), Keith Lehr (16th), and Jose-Luis Velador (24th).

It's also noteworthy that [Peter Gelencser](#), from Budapest, Hungary, cashed in this tournament. He finished in 23rd place. Gelencser is fast establishing himself as a top Lowball player. He won the No-Limit Deuce-to-Seven Lowball "Triple" Draw gold bracelet four days ago.

The Champion – Yan R. Chen

The \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Deuce-to-Seven Draw Lowball champion (Event #14) is Yan R. Chen, from Irvine, CA.

Chen is 45-years-old. He was born in Xi'an, China.

Chen first came to the United States to finish college, after spending his first three years at a university in China. He graduated from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, earning a degree in political science. Chen went on to attend law school at Columbia University in New York City. He dropped out.

Chen went through a self-described transitional phase during his 20s in which he said he was "trying to find (himself)." One afternoon about 13 years ago, Chen was playing low-stakes poker in a casino in Los Angeles. He was playing \$10-20 Limit Hold'em. In a wild game, Chen got caught up in the action when he called multiple raises sitting in late position with 5-3 off-suit. He ended up flopping trip-fives and won the hand against two big pocket pairs. When the cards were shown, Chen became the target of instant ridicule and was subject to a slew of profanities. Chen was so humiliated that he decided to spend a considerable amount of time studying poker and trying to improve as a player. Chen spent the next six months playing and learning. Over that period of time, Chen says he "found himself," and has been making it as a poker pro ever since.

Chen, who is married and is the proud father of two boys, specializes in high-stakes Lowball cash games.

On his third day of playing Lowball Deuce, Chen lost \$70,000. He again refocused his energy on trying to improve as a player and gradually became not only a winning player, but one of the best Lowball cash-game players in the world.

Chen's most common cash game today is No-Limit Lowball Deuce, with \$200-400 blinds and a \$100 ante.

Chen credited Lowball legend Billy Baxter with bringing No-Limit Deuce-to-Seven to the Commerce Casino in Los Angeles. He reveres Baxter and considers him to be the best Lowball player of all-time.

Chen cashed four times at last year's WSOP. This marked his first cash in 2010.

Chen made it to the final table of this event (at the \$2,500 buy-in level) last year, finishing in third place. That event was won by Phil Ivey.

After Ivey's victory last year, he was quoted as saying Yan Chen was his toughest opponent.

Chen's first time to cash at the WSOP was in 2006.

Chen collected \$92,817 for his first-place finish. He was presented with his first WSOP gold bracelet.

According to official records, Chen now has one win, three final table appearances, and seven cashes at the WSOP.

Despite making two final table appearances in Deuce Lowball tournaments the past two years, Chen also confided he was the first player knocked out of last year's \$10,000 buy-in Deuce-to-Seven Lowball World Championship.

The game Deuce-to-Seven is sometimes called "Kansas City Lowball." In an interesting coincidence, the champion of this event received his degree from the University of Missouri at Kansas City.

Winner Quotes

On why Lowball games appeal to him more than other forms of poker: "A good poker game requires a balance. For example – I'm not putting down other games – but No-Limit Hold'em, especially tournaments, rewards aggression. But aggression is only one component of the full set of skills that are required for a balanced game. Lowball requires a very balanced set of skills. You can't just try to run over the game. You cannot. You can do that less in this game than in any other game. But you also can't just sit around and wait for a hand. So, you have to be creative. Lowball allows a certain amount of creativity. It allows a certain amount of aggression. It rewards patience. This is a game of nuances. It is not a game of raw power. Once people are exposed to poker and achieve a certain skill level, I believe people will like this game."

On what winning his first WSOP gold bracelet means: "This feels special. The gold bracelet is the most coveted hardware in poker. It's special to finally win one."

On why he decided to leave law school, abandon a conventional career, and instead focus on poker: "I was trying to find my own direction in life. I never did, until I found poker."

On why he's done quite well in recent Lowball tournaments at the WSOP: "Not all poker games come to me naturally. Somehow Lowball seems to come to me naturally. Lowball just comes to me more naturally than other forms of poker."

On what was different last year when he finished fifth, versus this year which resulted in a victory: "Cash games play different than tournaments. Last year, I played at the final table (of this event) like it was a cash game. I tried to make some adjustments. But I did not know how. It was a learning experience. I feel that I made some adjustments, and it worked out."

On major influences in his poker career: "I want to mention Billy Baxter. He brought the game to the Commerce (Casino). Before that, I had been playing Limit Triple Draw. When people mention Lowball, they have to think of Billy Baxter. He's the consummate champion. He's my idol."

The Final Table

The final table consisted of two former WSOP gold bracelet winners – Mike Wattel and Alexander Kravchenko.

Three different nations were represented at the final table -- England, Russia, and the United States.

The final table began seven-handed.

Final table participants ranged in age from 24 to 45.

The runner up was Mike Wattel. He just missed what would have been a second WSOP gold bracelet victory. Wattel's first WSOP cash took place 11 years ago, when he won the Limit Omaha High-Low event in 1999, which was played at Binion's Horseshoe. Wattel, who lives in Mesa, AZ, collected the consolation prize of \$57,375 for second place. This was his 24th time to cash at the WSOP. This finish catapulted Wattel over the million-dollar mark in WSOP winnings. He also has 14 final table appearances.

The third-place finisher was Nicholas Binger, from Las Vegas, NV. It was his 12th time to cash at the WSOP. He now has nearly a quarter-million in winnings at the Rio, after collecting \$37,857 for this performance. Binger also has accrued some 40 cashes overall in major tournaments. His favorite game is Deuce-to-Seven Lowball.

The fourth-place finisher was Derric Haynie, from Lincoln, CA. This was his second time to cash at the WSOP, after finishing in-the-money in the No-Limit Hold'em Shootout last year; \$25,389 was paid to Hayne, who was recently married. Haynie has numerous big finishes in online poker tournaments.

The fifth-place finisher was Todd Thuan Bui, from Sacramento, CA. He cashed for the fifth time at the WSOP. This was his highest finish yet. Fifth place paid \$18,096.

The sixth-place finisher was James Bord, from London, England. This was his fourth time to cash at the WSOP and marked his highest Las Vegas finish ever. Sixth place paid \$12,997.

The seventh-place finisher was Alexander Kravchenko, from Tver, Russia. He is one of Russia's top players. Kravchenko won an Omaha High-Low Split gold bracelet in 2007. He also final tabled the Main Event championship that year, finishing fourth. Kravchenko collected \$9,568.

The final table officially began at 3:00 pm and ended at 10:15 pm. The final table clocked in at 7 hours, 15 minutes.

Other In-the-Money Finishers

The top 28 finishers collected prize money. Aside from those who made the final table, former WSOP gold bracelet finishers who cashed in this event included – Chris Bjinor (13th), Erik Seidel (14th), Keith Lehr (16th), and Jose-Luis Velador (24th).

Erik Seidel now has 59 career WSOP cashes. He moved back into a fourth-place tie with Berry Johnston on the all-time cashes list.

Chris Bjinor now has 52 career WSOP cashes. He moved one spot ahead of John Juanda

into a tie with Chau Giang for eighth place on the all time cashes list.

Odds and Ends

This is the 843rd gold bracelet event in World Series of Poker history. Note: This figure includes every official WSOP event played, including tournaments during the early years when there were no actual gold bracelets awarded. It also includes the 11 gold bracelets awarded at WSOP Europe (to date).

The final table was played on the ESPN Main Stage. Despite plenty of open seating, spectator interest in the event was scarce, due largely to the Draw Lowball format being relatively difficult for spectators to follow from their seats.

The official WSOP gold bracelet ceremony takes place on the day following the winner's victory (or some hours later when the tournament runs past midnight). 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, usually around 2:20 pm. The national anthem of the winner's nation is played. The entire presentation is open to public and media. Video and photography are permitted by both public and members of the media.

Chen requested that the national anthem of the United States be played at his WSOP gold bracelet ceremony.

WSOP Lowball Records

Poker Hall of Fame inductee Billy Baxter holds every conceivable record in the Lowball category. He has dominated this form of poker in a manner that is unprecedented for any player in any game in history. Perhaps only the late poker legend Bill Boyd, who enjoyed similar domination in Five-Card Draw poker (which is no longer spread at the WSOP), can rival Baxter's mastery of a single game.

All of Billy Baxter's seven WSOP gold bracelets were won playing various forms of Lowball.

Billy Baxter holds 16 WSOP cashes in Lowball events, the most of any player in this form of poker. To give some perspective of Baxter's excellence, the current second-place leaders in Lowball career cashes are Bobby Baldwin and "Oklahoma Johnny" Hale, each with 9.

Event History

Deuce-to-Seven Lowball made its tournament debut at the 1973 WSOP. The game is rarely played anywhere except at the very highest levels. It's rarely spread inside public card rooms -- either as cash games or tournaments. In fact, the WSOP is one of the few places where this poker variant is offered. The game was tacked onto the WSOP schedule because it was the preferred game of many high-stakes cash game players.

The very first Deuce-to-Seven Lowball champion was Aubrey Day. Since then, the Deuce-to-Seven gold bracelet has been won by a royal court of poker champions, including Jack Straus, Sailor Roberts, Billy Baxter, Doyle Brunson, Bobby Baldwin, Sarge Ferris, Stu Ungar, Dewey Tomko, Seymour Lebowitz, Bob Stupak, John Bonetti, Freddy Deeb, Johnny Chan, Erik Seidel, Jennifer Harman, Howard Lederer, O'Neil Longsen, Barry Greenstein and others.

Deuce-to-Seven Draw Lowball means the worst, or lowest-ranked, hand wins the pot. The very best possible 2-7 lowball hand is 2-3-4-5-7 of mixed suits. An ace counts as a high card. Flushes and straights count against the player. While a wheel (A-2-3-4-5) is the perfect hand in standard lowball, in Deuce-to-Seven it is usually a losing hand since the straight counts against the player.

In the "Triple-Draw" variant of this game, players may draw up to three times to make their hand. This tournament employed a "Single-Draw" format.

This same game was played at last year's WSOP, but the buy-in was \$2,500 (instead of \$1,500 this year). The lower buy-in boosted attendance from 147 last year to 250 at this year's event.

There is some difference of opinion as to where and when this game originated. Since the 1930s, variations of Lowball have been spread throughout California and Nevada. According to poker theorist David Sklansky, Limit 'Double-Draw' Lowball was first spread at the (now defunct) Vegas World during the early 1980s. Others cited a game called "Ten-Handed Triple-Draw Lowball" as the forerunner of Triple Draw, which was played at 'Amarillo Slim's' Super Bowl of Poker tournaments in Reno and Lake Tahoe during the period 1979 through 1984. Since 10-handed poker could only accommodate perhaps three or four players at most due to the number of cards needed to complete a hand, reducing the number of cards (to five) enabled more players to sit in the game.

Tournament Play

The tournament was played over three consecutive days, from June 5-7, 2010.

The final hand of the tournament came when Yan Chen's Th 8d 7c 6h 2h crushed Mike Wattel's Qs Jc Tc 9h 4c.

2010 WSOP Statistics

(Note: Event #13 is not included because it has not completed)

Through the conclusion of Event #14, the 2010 WSOP has attracted 15,320 total entries. \$26,272,500 in prize money has been awarded to winners.

Through the conclusion of Event #14, the nationalities of winners have been:

- United States (7)
- Canada (2)
- England (2)
- Hungary (1)
- New Zealand (1)

Through the conclusion of Event #14, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:

- United States (4)
- Vietnam (2)
- Canada (2)
- England (2)
- Hungary (1)
- New Zealand (1)
- China (1)

Through the conclusion of Event #14, the ratio of professional poker players to semi-pros and amateurs who won gold bracelets is as follows:

Professional Players (9): Michael Chow, Michael Mizrachi, Praz Bansi, Josh Tieman, Peter Gelencser, James Dempsey, Men "the Master" Nguyen, Matt Matros, Yan R. Chen

Semi-Pros (0): None

Amateurs (3): Duc Pham, Aadam Daya, Pascal Lefrancois

Note: A "pro" is defined as a player who makes the majority of his/her income from playing poker. However, there is some debate as to whether players who have lucrative industry deals and backing should really be termed as professionals. A "semi-pro" is defined as a player who derives some measure of income from playing poker over a reasonable period of time. However, many semi-pros have non-poker related business interests which provide a majority of earnings. "Amateurs" are players who have other means of support and do not play poker for income -- either part-time or full-time. Each winner is judged on a by case basis.

-- by Nolan Dalla

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