



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

Official Report
Event #35
Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em Championship
Buy-In: \$10,000
Number of Entries: 256
Total Net Prize Pool: \$2,406,400
Number of Places Paid: 32
First Place Prize: \$625,674
June 19-21, 2010

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

Here's the Heads Up: Ayaz Mahmood Wins!

Houston Poker Pro Wins First WSOP Gold Bracelet

Ayaz Mahmood Collects \$625,674 in Prize Money

Mahmood Wins Nine Straight Matches to Take Heads-Up Crown

Mahmood Becomes First Bangladesh-Born WSOP Champion

Through 35 WSOP Events -- WSOP Attendance up 12 Percent over Last Year

OVERVIEW

[Ayaz Mahmood](#) was the winner of the \$10,000 buy-in Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em championship at the 2010 World Series of Poker. This marked his first career WSOP gold bracelet victory after nearly a decade spent on the tournament trail. First place paid a whopping \$626,674 – which was Mahmood's biggest payout ever.

Mahmood is a 38-year-old former furniture retailer-turned poker pro now living in the Houston suburb of Sugarland, TX. He is originally from Bangladesh. In fact, Mahmood became the first Bangladesh-born WSOP gold bracelet winner in the 41-year history of the WSOP.

Mahmood won nine straight heads-up matches spread out over four days and nights to achieve his gold bracelet victory. The final match -- using a best two-out-of-three format -- proved to be the most grueling test. Mahmood faced a formidable foe, German-born poker pro Ernst Schmejkal, who ended up finishing second. The first match in the heads-up finale lasted a mind-numbing 6 hours and 20 minutes, making it the third-longest heads-up finale in WSOP history. The duel went so long that players agreed to resume play (Match 2) on an unscheduled fourth day. The second match proved to be much shorter than the first, as Mahmood won the victory in slightly more than an hour. As the runner up, Schmejkal collected a nice consolation prize of \$386,900.

This year's Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em championship sold out at 256 entries. The total prize pool amounted to \$2,406,400. The top 32 finishers collected prize money. Former WSOP gold bracelet finishers who cashed in this event included -- Alexander Kravchenko, David Williams, Scott Clements, and Antonio "the Magician" Esfandiari.

THE CHAMPION – AYAZ MAHMOOD

The \$10,000 buy-in Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em champion (Event #35) is Ayaz Mahmood, from Houston, TX.

Mahmood is 38-years-old.

Mahmood was born in Bangladesh. He arrived in the United States at the age of 14.

Mahmood owned a furniture store in the Houston area for several years, before he decided to play poker full-time in 2004. He says he was coached by various friends.

Mahmood's first year to attend the WSOP was in 2003. His first time to cash was in 2004.

Mahmood plays in high-stakes cash games in addition to tournaments. His favorite game is Pot-Limit Omaha.

Mahmood collected \$625,674 for first place.

According to official records, Ayaz Mahmood now has one win, four final table appearances, and 18 in-the-money finishes at the WSOP. His career WSOP earnings now total \$1,151,967.

He is the first WSOP champion ever born in Bangladesh.

WINNER QUOTES

On winning his first WSOP gold bracelet: "I'm very happy and I'm very excited. For 10 years, I have waited for this moment, so I am very excited."

On deciding to play in this year's Heads-Up championship: "I am a PLO player. This is the first time I have participated in the \$10,000 Heads-Up championship. It seemed I was very successful the first few rounds. All of the rounds are full of very tough players. I just played my game and was very successful. I'm very, very happy to beat such a very tough field."

More on playing in the Heads-Up championship: "The last year or so, I have been playing a lot of PLO heads-up. I've been very successful the last year and a half. So, this year, I decided to take a chance and try this one to see if I can do it in Hold'em, too."

On the final heads-up match against Ernst Mortiz Schmejkal, who finished second: "He's a very tough player. It took me 11 hours to finish him off. Yesterday, it took us almost 7 hours and then we went another almost five hours here. It's very tough, but I am very happy with how things went."

On his future plans and goals: "My next goal is to try and win the Main Event. And in 3 to 4 years, I want to beat Phil Hellmuth and get to 12 bracelets."

THE ELITE EIGHT

The elite eight (top eight finishers) included no former WSOP gold bracelet winners, which guaranteed a first-time champion.

The runner up was Ernst Mortiz Schmejkal, who is originally from Gottingen, Germany. He currently lives in London, England. He studied economics in college before taking up poker full-time. This was his first time to cash in a WSOP tournament. Schmejkal had previously cashed in a few tournaments in the UK and elsewhere. But this was his biggest live cash, by far. Second place paid \$386,900.

One semi-finalist was Jason Somerville, from Stony Brook, NY. His eighth career cash at the WSOP paid \$219,969. To get to the semi-finals, Somerville had to win 6 of 7 matches.

The other semi-finalist was Alexander Kostritsyn, from Moscow, Russia. His ninth career cash at the WSOP paid \$219,969.

The semi-finalists -- Somerville and Kostritsyn -- won 6 of 7 matches.

A top eight finisher was Vanessa Rousso, a.k.a. "Lady Maverick." The poker superstar, who has more than \$2.6 million in career tournament earnings, finished second in the 2009 NBC Heads Up Poker Championship played at Caesars Palace Las Vegas. She collected \$94,956 for making it to the quarter-finals in this event.

A top eight finisher was Faraz Jaka, from Chicago, IL. This was his ninth career cash at the WSOP. His \$94,956 payout now gives him more than half-a-million in WSOP earnings.

A top eight finisher was Ludovic Lacay, from London, England. He is best known for finishing 16th in last year's WSOP Main Event, which paid \$500,557. He added another \$94,956 in prize money for this performance.

A top eight finisher was Thang Pham, from Dallas, TX. This was his second time to cash this year; he earned \$94,956.

The finishers who finished in spots 5 through 8 -- Rousso, Jala, Lacay, and Pham -- won 5 of 6 matches.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top 32 finishers collected prize money. Former WSOP gold bracelet finishers who cashed in this event included -- Alexander Kravchenko, David Williams, Scott Clements, and Antonio "the Magician" Esfandiari.

Other notable names who cashed included Gavin Smith, Phil Gordon, and Bertrand

Grospellier.

The defending champion was Leo Wolpert, from Fairfax, VA. He entered this year's tournament but did not cash.

ODDS AND ENDS

This is the 863rd 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).

All matches/pairings in the heads-up competition were conducted by a random draw.

The tournament was played over four consecutive days. Since 256 players started the tournament in a heads-up format on Day One, 128 winners survived to play in the second round. The second round produced 64 survivors. The 64 played down to 32 in round three. On Day Two, the field of 32 was reduced to 16 in round four. Round five took the field from 16 down to 8. Round six (on Day Three) played from 8 down to 4. The final four players took seats in two separate matches at the final table. Those two winners faced off in a "Best Two-Out-Of-Three" heads-up match.

The first match was played on Day Three. The competition played out on ESPN's main stage. The second match was played on Day Four, on a feature table inside the Amazon Room.

The format used at the WSOP is similar to the March Madness brackets in (U.S.) college basketball. However, the field actually starts with 256 entrants instead of 64 teams. Furthermore, players in this competition are not seeded.

With 256 entries, the competition ultimately required that the tournament champion win nine heads-up matches.

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.

The winner Ayaz Mahmood requested that the national anthem of United States be played at his WSOP gold bracelet ceremony.

EVENT HISTORY

This is the fourth time this event has been included on the WSOP schedule. Registration has been limited to 256 entries the last three years. In the inaugural tournament played in 2007, more entries were accepted (392). However, some players randomly drew a bye and did not have to compete in the first round. This was ultimately viewed as giving too much of an advantage to those players – hence, the adoption of the single-elimination format with no byes beginning in 2008. This also meant that only specific multiples of entrants would be possible. Therefore, the tournament accepted a limited number of entries -- with 128, 256, or

512 being the most likely targets. It was decided that the tournament would be capped at 256 players – which appears to be the right decision given the public demand.

The previous Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em Championship winners were:

2009 – Leo Wolpert
2008 – Kenny Tran
2007 – Daniel Schreiber

TOURNAMENT PLAY

The tournament, scheduled for three days, ultimately was played over four consecutive days, from June 19-22, 2010.

The \$10,000 buy-in Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em World Championship sold out at 256 entries. The total prize pool amounted to \$2,406,400. The top 32 finishers collected prize money.

Ayaz Mahmood won nine straight heads-up matches to achieve his gold bracelet victory.

Mahmood later stated that his toughest heads-up opponent was his final adversary, Ernst Moritz Schmejkal.

MATCH 1: Mahmood and Schmejkal battled back and forth for 6 hours and 20 minutes. Mahmood held the lead the final two hours, but it took him a considerable amount of effort to vanquish his opponent and take the first match. The duel ended at about 5:30 am. Due to the late hour and the likelihood of another long match (particularly if the contest went to three matches), the players agreed to postpone the conclusion until later in the day. Mahmood led 1-0.

MATCH 2: Mahmood and Schmejkal began play at 7 pm on a Monday night and fought for more than three hours. The key hand of the match took place when Mahmood flopped a set of sixes against Schmejkal's flush draw. The set held up, which gave Mahmood the chip lead for a majority of the match. After about five hours of play, the final hand was dealt when Mahmood had Qh Th against Schmejkal's Ad 6s. After the flop came Ah Td 9c, Schmejkal was all-in with the best hand. Mahmood had a pair of tens and managed to make a straight when the final two cards came Jd Ks. Mahmood won the heads-up match by a count of 2-0.

Mahmood was asked to explain his decision on the final hand of the tournament, when his queen-ten made a straight: "First of all, I realized that whenever I raised, he would lay down his hand. But on that hand, I did not put him on an ace. I put him on maybe a king-ten. I had a queen-ten. There was a 99 percent chance he would lay down his hand. And even if he did not, he would have to beat me another time because we still had one more match to go. So, that's how I decided to take my chances. I got lucky with runner-runner, but I still had one more match to go, so I was comfortable with the hand."

MATCH 3: Did not take place, since Mahmood won the series 2-0.

2010 WSOP STATISTICS

Tournament attendance is up from this same point last year. Last year, through 35 events, there were 34,031 entries. Thus far this year, there have been 38,222 total entries, an increase of 12.3 percent.

Tournament prize money figures are down slightly from last year. Last year, through 35 events, the sum of total prize money won was \$67,497,640. This year's total prize money figure currently stands at \$66,994,930 – which represents a decrease of .7 percent (note the decimal).

Through the conclusion of Event #35, the nationalities of winners have been:

United States (24)
Great Britain (4)
Canada (3)
Hungary (1)
New Zealand (1)
France (1)
Russia (1)

Through the conclusion of Event #35, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:

United States (17)
Great Britain (4)
Canada (3)
Vietnam (2)
China (2)
Hungary (1)
New Zealand (1)
France (1)
Lebanon (1)
Russia (1)
Mexico (1)
Bangladesh (1)

Through the conclusion of Event #35, the ratio of professional poker players to semi-pros and amateurs who won gold bracelets is as follows:

Professional Players (23): Michael Chow, Michael Mizrachi, Praz Bansi, Josh Tieman, Peter Gelencser, James Dempsey, Men "the Master" Nguyen, Matt Matros, Yan R. Chen, Steve Gee, Carter Phillips, Jason DeWitt, Eric Buchman, David Baker, Richard Ashby, Dutch Boyd, Sammy Farha, David Warga, Will Haydon, Matt Keikoan, Mike Ellis, Luis Velador, Ayaz Mahmood

Semi-Pros (4): Frank Kassela, Tex Barch, Miguel Proulx, Jeffrey Papola

Amateurs (8): Duc Pham, Aadam Daya, Pascal Lefrancois, Simon Watt, Vanessa Hellebuyck, Jeff Tebben, Konstantin Puchkov, Harold Angle

Through the conclusion of Event #35, here is the list of repeat WSOP gold bracelet winners at the 2010 WSOP:

Praz Bansi
Men "the Master" Nguyen
Russ "Dutch" Boyd
Sammy Farha
David Warga (* his first WSOP win was in a non-open event)
Matt Keikoan
Luis Velador

-- 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: www.wsop.com. Thank you.

For official news and the latest updates from the 2010 World Series of Poker, visit: www.wsop.com

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