



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

Official Report
Event #40
Razz
Buy-In: \$2,500
Number of Entries: 365
Total Net Prize Pool: \$839,500
Number of Places Paid: 40
First Place Prize: \$214,085
June 21-24, 2010

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

Lights Out! Second Win This Year for Kassela!

All That Razz: Big Comeback Victory for Kassela

Frank Kassela Wins WSOP Gold Bracelet in Event 40

Kassela Collects \$214,084 in Prize Money

Through 40 WSOP Events -- WSOP Attendance up 11 Percent from Last Year

OVERVIEW

When the first of three long days in this year's [Razz](#) championship ended, Frank Kassela was in the worst possible situation short of being bounced out of the tournament. He ranked in 105th place. That's 105th place -- out of 105 players. Dead last. Surviving on bread crumbs. One hand away from down to the felt.

[Frank Kassela](#) had no shot to win. None whatsoever.

Two days later, with mountains of chips piled in front of him, Kassela was beaming at the final table at the 2010 World Series of Poker. With flashbulbs popping high above, Kassela answered a question that would have been unthinkable 48-hours earlier.

The question was – how did he do it? How did he manage to comeback from being dead last? How did this mild-mannered semi-pro poker player and businessman make it all the way to the final table and overcome a huge chip disparity? How did he end up with every single chip in the tournament and win his second WSOP gold bracelet victory within two weeks?

Well, for one – Kassela won a critical hand early on Day Two and managed to double up. Within the first two hours, he was in 74th place out of 81 survivors. It was a nice comeback, but that's something like reaching Pahrump, NV, on a cross-country trip from LA to NYC. Indeed, Kassela still had a long way to go.

Kassela fought and scratched and continued to move up in the chip standings. Meanwhile, one by one, players busted. Once the money was reached, Kassela had about an average-sized stack. He was emotionally freerolling, fortunate, he knew, just to be in-the-money. It was like the town hobo stumbling over a bottle of unopened Thunderbird -- temporary bliss, but still not much of a future. Over the next several hours, Kassela went from tournament hobo to bona fide contender. He was able to move into a comfortable chip position, and eventually arrived at the final table as a formidable force.

That was just the start of it. Unfortunately, things did not go well for Kassela during the first seven hours of what turned out to be a grueling 10-hour finale. He was dead last again in chips when play stood at four handed. In fact, he was all-in and down to the felt again.

Then, something happened. Call it divine providence. Call it a miracle. Call it some idiot at the local electric company tripping over the wrong switch on the electrical grid.

The entire building went dark.

The lights went out.

While four tournaments were being played simultaneously and the Rio's Amazon Room was filled with approximately 1,500 people – while the final table of the Razz championship was being played and the action was down to four people -- the room fell into total darkness. A power outage temporarily hit the Rio (and much of Las Vegas). The lights remained out for about 20 seconds before emergency generators were engaged and began to provide limited power and lighting. The mood was surreal for the next several minutes, as play throughout the Rio was suspended until full power and lighting were restored.

Once the lights came back partially, the final table remained in a shadowy state. So, the action shifted to the ESPN Main Stage, which was amply supplied with plenty of light. Chips were moved. Spectators shuffled their way towards new seats. Players collectively transferred to seats at a new final table. It was just the break that Frank Kassela desperately needed. The break, certainly accidental and beyond anyone's control, allowed Kassela to gather his thoughts, refocus his attention, and take a new seat at another final table with a fresh attitude and renewed sense of optimism.

Two hours later, it was all over. The lights were back on in full. Sitting in the spotlight was none other than Frank Kassela, the champion. Kassela became the first multiple gold bracelet winner of 2010.

Kassela collected \$214,084 in prize money. He earned gold bracelet number two. But what will undoubtedly be most memorable about this long night was not just the prize money he won or the satisfaction of victory. What shall be remembered most was *how* Frank Kassela won the most unlikely of victories – how he rose from the ash heap of being dead last in chips and how he rechanneled his energy when fate provided him the opportunity.

The two-time champion now has a new nickname. Call him Frank "Lights Out" Kassela.

THE CHAMPION – FRANK “LIGHTS OUT” KASSELA

The \$2,500 buy-in Seven-Card Razz champion (Event #40) is Frank Kassela, from Las Vegas, NV. He previously lived in Memphis, TN.

Kassela is 42-years-old. He was born in Chicago, IL. His family relocated and he grew up in the Dallas suburb of Mesquite.

At age 25, Kassela moved to Memphis, TN -- where he started a successful business.

Kassela is the owner of Mid-American Specialties, which sells promotional and specialty products, primarily to government offices. His company has one office in Dallas and three offices in Memphis.

Kassela says he sleeps very little. He usually gets about three to four hours of sleep per night.

Kassela began playing poker seriously about 10 years ago.

Kassela moved to Las Vegas recently so he could concentrate more on poker playing. He could be classified either as a pro or semi-pro, depending on the time of year. Kassela is playing poker full-time now; however, during other months he spends much of his time concentrating on his business.

Kassela's favorite poker game is Pot-Limit Omaha. He is trying to start up a regular mid-to-high stakes Pot-Limit game at various Las Vegas casinos. Since he has not been successful, he often plays PLO with \$2-5 blinds, which is the largest game found on a regular basis.

Kassela has already accumulated more than \$1.8 million in career tournament winnings. He has 37 major cashes. His only tournament victory prior to two wins at this year's WSOP was in a Pot-Limit tournament at the 2009 LA Poker Classic.

Kassela's first tournament cash was at the 2003 Jack Binion World Poker Open.

Kassela collected \$214,085 for first place. He was presented with his second WSOP gold bracelet.

Kassela won his first gold bracelet just two weeks ago in the Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split championship.

According to official records, Kassela now has two wins, three final table appearances, and six cashes at the WSOP. His career WSOP earnings now total \$764,144.

Kassela now becomes a real threat to tie the record for most wins at a WSOP (one year), which is three.

WINNER QUOTES

On how he feels after winning gold bracelet number two: "It's awesome. It's really exciting. I've been playing in a ton of events since I won that last one, just because I knew I had a decent chance at 'Player of the Year.' Now, with this – I think I am tied. Vladimir is up there, so it is going to be close."

On making an incredible comeback: "I had 5,100 in chips at the start of Day Two. I got lucky. I mean, you have to get lucky, especially at Razz. I think the bets were 600-1,200 at the time, so I had like four bets left. I ended up making a hand on seventh street, and doubled up."

On the lights going out at the Rio while the final table was being played: "It was startling. All we did was cover our chips. I was just sitting in my chair in the darkness and lowered my hands and covered my chips. We had an emergency light from someone's cell phone. The tournament director told us to pull back our antes and we sat there and waited until the lights came back on. Then, the lights came back on enough for us to play four more minutes until the end of the level. After that we moved to the main table. It was a good thing."

On the power outage helping him to refocus: "It was definitely good for me that the power went out. It was a good thing. It was bad for my opponents."

On the prospects of winning a third gold bracelet this year, which would tie five other players who share that record: "Sure, I can even beat the record. That's what I am going to try to do. Why not? I'll go over to Europe if I have to." (Note: WSOP Europe events count towards the record.)

THE FINAL TABLE

The final table included three former WSOP gold bracelet winners – Chris Bjorin, Jennifer Harman, and Frank Kassela.

The final table began eight-handed.

The final table included players from five different nations: Canada, Finland, Great Britain, Russia, and the United States.

The runner up was Maxwell Troy, a 37-year-old poker pro from Los Angeles, CA. This was his second time to cash this year, after finishing as the runner up in Event #27 (Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split). He added \$132,229 to his poker bankroll and now has over a quarter-million in earnings at this year's WSOP.

The third-place finisher was George Lewis, from North York, Ontario (Canada). He is a 49-year-old financial services professional. Lewis cashed one other time this year. But this was his best WSOP finish to date, which paid \$85,284.

The fourth-place finisher was Vladimir Shchemelev, from St. Petersburg, Russia. This was his sixth time to cash at the WSOP. He is a banker who is experiencing a breakout year at this year's WSOP. Shchemelev collected \$61,795.

Shchemelev became the first player at this year's WSOP to make four final table appearances. He now has a 2nd, 4th, 7th, and 7th place showing in four tries. He took the lead in the 2010 WSOP "Player of the Year" race – at least for a few hours until Frank Kassela won his second gold bracelet. The race is on.

The fifth-place finisher was Mikko Pispala, from Helsinki, Finland. This was his second time to cash at the WSOP. His first cash took place back in 2007. Fifth place paid \$45,433.

The sixth-place finisher was two-time gold bracelet winner Jennifer Harman (a.k.a. Jennifer Harman Traniello), from Las Vegas, NV. Her wins were in 2000 (Deuce-to-Seven Lowball) and 2002 (Limit Hold'em). She made her second final table this year (she took third in the

Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split championship). Harman now has 26 WSOP cashes, which ranks second on the all-time list among women. Harman collected \$33,890.

The seventh-place finisher was Stuart Rutter, from Birmingham, England. Rutter cashed for the third time this year, which paid \$25,646.

The eighth-place finisher was longtime tournament veteran Chris Bjin, from London, England. Bjin is a two-time WSOP gold bracelet winner, who achieved victories in 1997 (Pot-Limit Omaha) and 2000 (No-Limit Hold'em). Eighth-place paid \$19,686.

The final table began at 6:40 pm and ended at 5:20 am, meaning the duration was 10 hours and 30 minutes.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top 40 finishers collected prize money. Former WSOP gold bracelet finishers who cashed in this event included – Frank Kasella (1st), Jennifer Harman (5th), Chris Bjin (8th), Artie Cobb (10th), Linda Johnson (16th), Dario Minieri (19th), David Chiu (20th), Joe Hachem (22nd), Hasan Habib (23rd), Daniel Negreanu (29th), and Greg Raymer (37th).

With his eighth-place finish in this event, Chris Bjin cashed for the fifth time this year and 55th time in his career. Bjin now ranks seventh on the all-time WSOP cashes list, in a tie with Humberto Brenes. Bjin also has 22 WSOP final table appearances, which ranks 15th all-time.

With his 20th-place finish, David Chiu cashed for the 46th time. He currently ranks 14th on the all-time list.

With his 29th-place finish, Daniel Negreanu now has 47 career cashes. This currently ranks in a 12th-place tie with “Miami” John Cernuto on the all-time cashes list.

2005 WSOP Champion Joe Hachem finished 22nd. This was his first time to cash this year.

2004 WSOP Champion Greg “Fossilman” Raymer finished 37th.

The defending champion was Jeffrey Lisandro, from Salerno, Italy. He did not enter this year’s tournament because he made it to the final table of Event #37, where he finished fifth.

ODDS AND ENDS

Tournament attendance increased from 315 entries last year up to 365 entrants in 2010. This represents an increase of 15.9 percent.

This is the 868th 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 to date at WSOP Europe.

Razz is a variant of lowball. It is dealt out in a Seven-Card Stud format. The objective is to make the lowest five-card poker hand. Ace-to-five is the best possible hand in Razz.

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.

Kassela requested that the national anthem of United States be played at his WSOP gold bracelet ceremony, held Friday June 26th, 2010. This will be his second time on the Main Stage for the ceremony.

EVENT HISTORY

Razz was first introduced onto the WSOP schedule in 1973. It has been included on the tournament schedule every year since then, except 1976.

The illustrious list of former winners in this event reads like a "Who's Who" of poker. Former Razz champions include -- Billy Baxter, Doyle Brunson, Eskimo Clark, T.J. Cloutier, Ted Forrest, Linda Johnson, Berry Johnston, O'Neil Longson, Lakewood Louie, Tom McEvoy, Huck Seed, Barry Greenstein and Jeffrey Lisandro.

Four players have won this event two times in WSOP history. This most exclusive club of repeat winners is comprised of Sam Angel, Bones Berland, Mike Hart, and Huck Seed.

The Razz championship was televised by ESPN in 2004. It was one of the most interesting tournament final tables ever shown. There were several interesting personalities among the eight finalists and lots of table chatter. However, the game was never broadcast again, presumably because it was difficult for viewers to follow and confusing (to novices) since the object of the game is to make the worst hand.

The 2005 Razz championship was one of the longest final tables in WSOP history. That finale clocked in at a mind-numbing 16 hours – which was then a WSOP record. The Razz mark stood for three years until the 2008 WSOP Europe Main Event final table, which lasted 19 hours. Note: A narrative from the 2005 Razz championship can be read at the conclusion of this report.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

The tournament was played over three consecutive days, from June 21-24, 2010.

The \$2,500 buy-in Razz championship attracted 365 entries. The total prize pool amounted to \$839,500. The top 40 finishers collected prize money.

2010 WSOP STATISTICS

Tournament attendance is up significantly from this point last year. Last year, through 40 events, there were 39,336 entries. Thus far this year, there have been 43,832 total entries, an increase of 11.4 percent.

Through the conclusion of Event #40, the nationalities of gold bracelet winners have been:

United States (27)
Great Britain (4)

Canada (4)
Hungary (2)
New Zealand (1)
France (1)
Russia (1)

Through the conclusion of Event #40, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:

United States (20)
Great Britain (4)
Canada (4)
Vietnam (2)
China (2)
Hungary (2)
New Zealand (1)
France (1)
Lebanon (1)
Russia (1)
Mexico (1)
Bangladesh (1)

Through the conclusion of Event #40, the ratio of professional poker players to semi-pros and amateurs who won gold bracelets is as follows:

Professional Players (27): 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, Phil Ivey, Luigi Kwassser, Scott Montgomery, Steven Kelly

Semi-Pros (5): Frank Kassela, Tex Barch, Miguel Proulx, Jeffrey Papola, Frank Kassela

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

Through the conclusion of Event #40, here is the list of repeat WSOP gold bracelet winners:

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
Phil Ivey
Frank Kassela (two wins this year)

Through the conclusion of 2001 World Series of Poker Event #40:

Youngest Winner – Steven Kelly (21)
Oldest Winner – Harold Angle (78)
Female Winners (open event) – None
Multiple-Event Winners (this year) – Frank Kassela (2)

A LOOK BACK: THE WORST FINAL TABLE IN WSOP HISTORY (2005 RAZZ)

As Bad As It Gets: O'Neil Longson Wins Grueling Razz Championship

If Doyle Brunson's record-tying tenth World Series of Poker lifetime victory was poker at its finest, then the final table of the Seven-Card Razz event was every poker fan's worst nightmare. Think of working as a security guard on the graveyard shift in an empty warehouse. O'Neil Longson won the most punishing event thus far at this year's World Series. He topped an all-time Razz turnout (291 entries) and collected \$125,690 in prize money. This was gold bracelet Number Three for the near-comatose retiree and poker pro from Utah.

In every way, shape, and form the Razz finale was dreadful. First, it lasted a seemingly infinite 16 hours. On Day Two, play started off at 2 pm. The tournament did not end until 8 am the next morning. What brave (or insane) spectators remained were scattered inside a near-empty tournament area and were either snoozing or catatonic. The winner, O'Neil Longson showed little emotion after winning, most appropriate given the circumstances. It was about as interesting as watching porno while wearing a blindfold. A thrilling poker moment, this was not.

This is not to say that Longson, a widely-respected tournament veteran, did not put on a masterful performance. In fact, play at the final table was extraordinary. There were a number of highly interesting poker personalities in the finale, which might have provided some riveting drama had the game been, let's say -- No-Limit Hold'em. But instead, the game was Razz -- a hybrid of Seven-Card Stud in which the object of the game is to make the worst possible hand. There are no devastating rivers, nor coin flip showdowns in Razz. Instead, there are hours and hours and hours of tedious monotony. It's poker version of an assembly line.

The eight finalists took their seats and play began. There were three former gold bracelet winners -- O'Neil Longson (2), Mike Wattel (1), and Hassan Kamoei (1). Players were eliminated in the following order:

8th -- Hassan Kamoei went out first. He arrived with the lowest stack (11,500). Kamoei went out with an 8-6 low which lost to Larry Cesareo's 8-4. Kamoei collected \$11,245 and -- being perhaps the biggest winner of the finale -- got a good night's rest.

7th -- Larry Cesareo was the next player to exit. He was low on chips and made his last stand with 10-9, ultimately losing to Archie Karas' 9-6. Cesareo was slayed in 7th place -- good for \$15,660.

6th -- Mickey Wernick is a true poker pioneer. He was one of the first non-American players to visit the WSOP back in the late 1970s. He saw a new game being played called 'Texas Hold'em', told a few friends back in England, and the Brits have been playing it ever since. Wernick is deserving of a gold bracelet and he has a number of in-the-money finishes and final tables in his 25-year WSOP career. But 6th place was the highest he could climb on this night. Wernick went out when his 9-8-6 was bested by Archie Karas' 9-8-4. Wernick earned \$19,675 in prize money.

5th -- Mike Wattel fell just shy of winning gold bracelet number two a few weeks ago. He was the runner up in the Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split event. Wattel walked away disappointed again, this time. He fell low on chips and had a number of decent starting hands, which then turned into dogs when face cards and pairs killed his hand. Wattel finally went out in 5th place and received \$24,900.

4th -- Anargyros Karabourniotis, a.k.a. Archie Karas, is one of gambling's most mythological figures. Ten years ago, Karas strolled into Binion's Horseshoe with a few thousand dollars in

his pocket and started shooting craps. He won. The next day, he came back and won again. Big. Over the next few weeks, Karas went on the biggest roll in Las Vegas history, winning an estimated \$25 million at one point. But in the end, Karas lost it all. In recent years, Karas has played tournament poker regularly. Although he has played in the highest cash games in the world, he has not yet won a major tournament. Karas came close on this night, but ultimately fell short. There's no telling how long the \$30,120 that was paid out to Karas lasted. Odds are that next, he'll either end up winning the Rio property or going bust.

3rd – Al Barbieri is just what one would expect in a person, given his South Philadelphia roots. Think of an athletic-looking Joe Pesci. The Italian-neighborhood goombah, nicknamed 'Sugar Bear' (this is for real, folks) had Bruno Fitoussi 'all in' at one point and it seemed he might get heads-up against Longson. But Barbieri lost that crucial hand and then saw his tall towers of chips get wacked like an extra in "Goodfellas." Barbieri was eliminated in 3rd place – good for \$42,165.

2nd Place – Heads-up play began with O'Neil Longson holding a 2-to-1 chip lead. The betting levels were so high that only a hand or two could swing the lead in either direction. In the end, Bruno Fitoussi ended up losing the final hand of the night (make that, morning) with 10-7 getting topped by 9-8.

The runner up was Bruno Fitoussi, a.k.a. 'the King.' Fitoussi is best known in the poker world as the manager of Aviation Club de France, in Paris. Fitoussi has also proven to be a top poker player in his own right. He won the World Heads-Up Championship in 2001 and also finished 15th in the main event (WSOP) in 2003. Second place paid \$70,275.

1st Place – O'Neil Longson is a 71-year-old professional poker player, who lists "retired" as his profession. Insert your own punch line – the possibilities are endless. But Longson shows no signs of slowing down, at least when it comes to winning tournaments. This was Longson's second gold bracelet victory in two years.

Oddly enough, this was a day of both similarities and contrasts. Poker legend Doyle Brunson won his tenth gold bracelet on the same day. That meant that two players in their 70s have now won championships at the World Series. Poker may be a young man's game, but Longson and Brunson are showing the world that the old-timers can win, as well.

Longson walked away from the nearly-empty poker room as he has many times, strolling casually and quietly back to his room at the end of a long day. Those who may have passed him en route would never have known by the stoic look on Longson's face that he had just won six-figures and become a three-time WSOP winner. Longson never even cracked a smile.

If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?

-- 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.

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at: nolandalla@aol.com or nolandalla@gmail.com

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