



2011 World Series of Poker Presented by Jack Link's Beef Jerky
Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada

Official Report
Event #3
Omaha High-Low Split
Buy-In: \$1,500
Number of Entries: 925
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,248,750
Number of Places Paid: 90
First Place Prize: \$262,283
June 1-3, 2011

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES:

Cheech Barbaro Wins WSOP Gold Bracelet

Chicago Poker Pro Wins Omaha High-Low Split Event

Largest Live Omaha Tournament in History Packs the WSOP – 925 Entrants for Event #3

Omaha Field Up 13 Percent Over Same Tournament Held in 2010

Scott Clements Cashes Again – His 9th Cash in Last 16 WSOP Omaha Tournaments

WSOP Attendance Up Over Last Year

Four Gold Bracelets Won – 55 More to Go!

OVERVIEW

The largest live Omaha High-Low Split tournament in history concluded today with the play and conclusion of the [\\$1,500 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split Championship](#), held at the 2011 World Series of Poker.

The new poker champion is Cheech Barbaro, from Chicago, IL. The former bartender earned \$252,283 in prize money. Barbaro was also presented with the ultimate symbol of achievement in the game of poker, the WSOP gold bracelet. This marked his first WSOP victory.

Barbaro is a 37-year-old poker pro. He has been playing full-time for about two years. Barbaro's tournament initial breakthrough took place at the WSOP Circuit stop last November, which took place at Hammond Horseshoe (in Indiana). He won the HORSE championship there. Barbaro parlayed that first-time victory into an even bigger win here in Las Vegas. Remarkably, this was the first WSOP tournament Barbaro had ever entered.

This was the third event on this year's WSOP schedule. The tournament attracted 925 entries, which shattered the all-time record as the biggest live Omaha High-Low tournament in history. The previous mark was set in 2009, when 918 Omaha fanatics jammed the Rio in search of victory.

Attendance for this tournament increased over the previous year, when there were 818 entries. The 100-plus increase this year represents a 13-percent increase over 2010.

The total prize pool amounted to \$1,248,750. The top 90 finishers collected prize money, the most players ever paid for a live Omaha Split tournament.

Two-time gold bracelet winner Scott Clements finished 21st. He won his first WSOP title in 2006 in the \$3,000 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split event. Clements arguably holds the most impressive Omaha tournament resume of any player over the past five years. He's won one event, and finished 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 9th, 39th, 54th, and now 21st – in what amounts to 16 such tournaments over that span.

Remarkably, this was the first time in WSOP history that the first four gold bracelet tournaments have been won by players who cashed for the first time. Events 1-3 (and the WSOP Circuit National Championship) were all won by players who had never previously finished in-the-money in any WSOP tournament.

For a list of all players who cashed, in [EVENT #3](#), please visit WSOP.com.

THE CHAMPION – CHEECH BARBARO

The 2011 World Series of Poker \$25,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em Heads-Up Champion is Francesco Barbaro, from Chicago, IL.

Barbaro goes by the nickname "Cheech," which is the Italian-shortened version of Francesco.

Barbaro is originally from Chicago, IL. He is 37-years-old.

Barbaro mostly recently worked as a bartender, before taking up poker as a full-time occupation. He worked as a bartender for three years, because – as he explained – he was broke.

Barbaro is divorced. He has a 15-year-old daughter. She lives in South Carolina.

Barbaro's breakthrough victory in tournament poker took place at last year's WSOP Circuit series, held at the Hammond Horseshoe, located across the border from Chicago, in Indiana. Barbaro won the \$350 buy-in HORSE tournament. First prize paid \$16,431.

The WSOP Circuit motto is, "First the Ring, Then the Bracelet." Winners received gold rings for winning Circuit events.

Barbaro is one of only three players in history to win both a WSOP Circuit gold ring and a WSOP gold bracelet within the same season. The other two players are Chris Bell (2010) and Chris Reslock (2007).

For his victory, Barbaro credited both his father (who taught him how to play) and his daughter (for inspiration).

Barbaro was cheered to victory by several close friends, who live in the Chicago area.

Barbaro collected \$262,283 for first place. He was also awarded his first WSOP gold bracelet.

According to official records, Barbaro now has 1 win, 1 final table appearance, and 1 in-the-money finish at the WSOP.

Barbaro currently has \$262,283 in WSOP winnings.

Barbaro has never played in any official WSOP events prior to this occasion. He did attend the WSOP ten years ago, but limited his play to cash games. This was the first WSOP tournament Barbaro had ever entered.

Barbaro estimates that he has played in only about 12 or so tournaments in his lifetime up to this point.

Barbaro is to be regarded as a pro poker player, since he plays poker full-time.

Barbaro insists his best poker game is Seven-Card Stud High-Low. However, he admits he thinks he may be pretty good at Omaha, as well.

Barbaro insists that he is not finished. His goal is to play in more events and earn more cashes and victories.

WINNER QUOTES

On bartending before playing poker for a living "I basically started working as a bartender because I went broke.

That was an easy job for me to get, because my friend owned a bar.”

On how things went at the final table: “I was card dead for about an hour and a half. But then I won several big hands in a row including a hand where I crippled Matt Waxman. From there, I became even more aggressive.”

On what he plans to do with his quarter-million in prize money: “It’s going to put me in some of the \$10,000 buy-in tournaments.”

On what’s the best thing about becoming a WSOP champion: “I am not into fame. I do not want to be famous. I don’t care about people knowing who I am. But the bracelet does matter. It’s everything.”

More in what winning a WSOP gold bracelet means: “It’s a great sense of accomplishment. Going through 924 other players and winning is pretty awesome.”

On winning the first WSOP event he ever entered: “I must say the win at the Horseshoe in Indiana really helped me here. I was not nervous. I was actually more nervous before this all started. But once I sat down to play, I started feeling really comfortable.

THE FINAL TABLE

The final table was made up of nine players.

The final table contained only one former gold bracelet winner – Humberto Brenes.

The final table was comprised of players from the following nations – Costa Rica (1), Russia (1) and the United States (7).

Final table participants ranged in age from 26 (youngest) to 64 (oldest).

The runner up was Kostas Kalathakis, from Port Richey, FL. He is a 28-year-old businessman who focuses on real estate and social media marketing. He previously won a Omaha High-Low tournament held at the Wynn Las Vegas.

The third-place finisher was Matt Waxman, from Parkland, FL. He now has \$1.3 million in tournament earnings. His biggest win came at last season’s WSOP Circuit Main Event, held at Harrah’s Atlantic City.

The fourth-place finisher was Bradley Helm, from Scottsdale, AZ. He is a casino host at Casino Arizona.

The fifth-place finisher was Michael DeVeronica, from West Park, FL. This marked his first time to cash at the WSOP in Las Vegas.

The sixth-place finisher was popular Costa Rica poker pro Humberto Brenes, who is among the all-time leaders in multiple WSOP categories. This was Brenes’ 59th career cash, which places him in sixth place on the all-time cashes list. He is now one in-the-money finish behind Erik Seidel.

The seventh-place finisher was Cam McKinley, from Vancouver, WA.

The eighth-place finisher was Vladimir Shchemelev, from Russia. Last year, he set the mark as the first player in history to make three final table appearances in \$10,000 buy-in events, and up.

The ninth-place finisher was Travis Pearson, from Las Vegas, NV. This was his fifth time to cash at the WSOP.

Final table play began at 6:40 pm on a Friday night. Play concluded at about 1 am. Hence, the final table lasted about 6 hours, 20 minutes.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

Several former WSOP gold bracelet winners cashed in this event.

Two-time gold bracelet winner Scott Clements finished 21st. He won his first WSOP title in 2006 in the \$3,000 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split event. Clements arguably holds the most impressive Omaha resume of any player over the past five years. He’s won one event, and finished 2nd, 3rd, 7th, 9th, 39th, 54th, and now 21st – in what amounts to 16 such tournaments over that span.

After exiting in 21st place, Clements was asked about his impressive Omaha record. "I'm never satisfied unless I win it," he replied.

Five-time gold bracelet winner Allen Cunningham finished in 26th place. He now has 44 WSOP cashes, which ranks 19th all-time.

Seven-time gold bracelet winner Men "the Master" Nguyen finished in 27th place. He now has 71 WSOP cashes, which ranks second all-time. Nguyen is eight cashes behind the leader, Phil Hellmuth – with 79.

Three-time gold bracelet winner Chau Giang finished 29th. He now has 57 cashes, which ranks in a tie with T.J. Cloutier for eighth-place all-time.

Eight-time gold bracelet winner Erik Seidel finished in 32nd place. Seidel was schedule to play in an exhibition rematch of his classic 1989 heads-up confrontation against Johnny Chan which would have been televised. But he had to miss the duel since he ran deep in this tournament and could not play in both. Seidel now has 61 WSOP cashes, which ranks in a tie with Berry Johnston, for fourth place.

Three-time gold bracelet winner Barry Greenstein finished 36th. This was his 48th career cash, ranking 13th along with Mike Sexton.

James Bord, the defending WSOP Europe Main Event Champion (2010), from London took 42nd place.

Other former gold bracelet winners who cashed included – Mary Jones, Ted Lawson, Dario Alioto, and "Minneapolis Jim" Meehan

ODDS AND ENDS

This was the biggest live Omaha High-Low Split tournament in history. The previous record was set in 2009, when there were 918 entrants for the same \$1,500 level Omaha event.

Attendance for this tournament increased over the previous year, when there were 818 entries. The 925-player field in 2011 represents a 13-percent increase over 2010.

An interesting stat: Omaha High-Low has long been considered by many to be an older-player's game. The average age of its devotees tend to be older than the younger No-Limit Hold'em crowd. For the first time, new WSOP statistics seem to prove this. The average age of entrants for this tournament was 42.6 years. By contrast, the most recent No-Limit Hold'em tournament had an average player age of 30 years. That's 12 years older, on average.

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 The Pavilion, which is the expansive main tournament room host all noon starts this year. The ceremony begins at the conclusion of the first break of the noon tournament. The ceremony usually starts 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 is permitted by both public and members of the media.

Barbaro's gold bracelet ceremony is set to take place on Sunday, June 5th. The U.S. National Anthem will be played in honor of his victory.

EVENT HISTORY

Omaha High-Low Split has been included on the WSOP schedule every year since 1990. Omaha (High) was first played at the 1983 WSOP. The game was phased out as player interest declined, while Omaha High-Low Split gained popularity. The last Omaha (High) tournament was held in 2003. All Omaha-related events between 1983 and 1989 were either High-Only or Pot-Limit Omaha.

The previous winners of this event were as follows:

Michael Chow (2010)
Thang T. Luu (2009)
Thang T. Luu (2008)
Alex Kravchenko (2007)
Jack Zwerner (2006)
Patrick Poels (2005)
Curtis Bibb (2004)

Frankie O'Dell (2003)
Mike Matusow (2002)
Scotty Nguyen (2001)
Howard Lederer (2000)
Mike Wattel (1999)
Paul Rowe (1998)
Deane Stonier (1997)
Men "the Master" Nguyen (1996)
Dr. Max Stern (1995)
J.C. Pearson (1994)
Erik Seidel (1993)
Eli Balas (1992)
Joe Becker (1991)
Monte Kous (1990)

The \$1,500 buy-in event has traditionally been held early on WSOP schedule. As Omaha High-Low Split gained popularity, other buy-in events were added, including buy-in levels from \$2,000 up to \$10,000.

This tournament had the distinction of being the only WSOP event of the modern era which produced a back-to-back champion. Thang Luu won his consecutive titles in 2008 and 2009.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

The \$1,500 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split tournament attracted 925 entries. The total prize pool amounted to \$1,248,750. The top 90 finishers collected prize money.

The tournament officially began on Wednesday, June 1st, at noon. The tournament officially ended on June 3rd, at 1:00 am PST.

2011 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of Event #3, the 2011 WSOP has attracted 2,003 combined total entries. \$5,671,250 in prize money has been awarded to winners, so far.

This year, there are 59 gold bracelet events being held in Las Vegas. This is an increase of two events over last year's number -- 57.

The average age of players in this event was 42.57 years.

There were 36 females who entered the first event. This figure represents 3.9 percent of the field.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (3)
Great Britain (1)

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

United States (3)
Great Britain (1)

Through the conclusion of this event, the home-states of winners has been:

Arkansas (1)
California (1)
Illinois (1)

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 (1): Jake Cody, Cheech Barbaro

Semi-Pros (1): Sean R. Drake

Amateurs (1): Sam Barnhart

Note: Various categories and statistics will be updated with each gold bracelet event as they are completed.

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 2011 World Series of Poker, visit: www.wsop.com

For statistics and historical information from the 2011 World Series of Poker, contact Nolan Dalla at: nolandalla@aol.com or nolandalla@gmail.com

For specific media photo requests, email dcurley@hillmanpr.com and list "Urgent Media Request" as the subject line.

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