



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

Official Report  
Event #11  
Omaha High-Low Split  
Buy-In: \$10,000  
Number of Entries: 202  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,898,800  
Number of Places Paid: 27  
First Place Prize: \$465,216  
June 6-9, 2011

#### TOURNAMENT HEADLINES:

Viacheslav Zhukov Finds a Treasure Chest

22-Year-Old Russian Poker Pro Wins First WSOP Gold Bracelet

Zhukov Becomes Fourth Russian WSOP Champ in History

Zhukov Collects \$465,216 Top Prize in First-Ever WSOP Cash

Top Internet Pro George Lind Finishes as Runner Up

WSOP Strong Numbers Continue – Attendance Continues to Exceed Last Year's

11 Gold Bracelets Won – 47 More Still Up For Grabs

#### OVERVIEW

**Las Vegas, NV (June 9, 2011)** – One of the most star-studded fields of the year turned up for the latest World Series of Poker tournament, which was the \$10,000 Buy-In Omaha High-Low Split Championship. The high-caliber four-day competition finally concluded today with the crowning of a new gold bracelet champion.

The winner was Viacheslav Zhukov, from Stary Oskol, Russia. He is a 22-year-old professional poker player. Prior to taking up the game full-time last year, Zhukov graduated from Moscow Mining University where he studied geology.

Zhukov must have learned something at the mining school. He appears to be using his formal education to maximum benefit. He came to this year's WSOP seeking to find gold and cash, and ended up uncovering a treasure chest.

This was not only Zhukov's first year to attend the WSOP. It was, in fact, his *very first* WSOP cash. Zhukov sure picked a powerhouse event in which to make a splash. He came out on top in one of the toughest events in poker, thereby achieving, by any measure, an international tournament breakthrough. Indeed, the championship-level Omaha High-Low Split event is widely-regarded as one of the toughest fields of any

tournament held. As proof, consider that three-time gold bracelet winner Sammy Farha won this same event last year.

Zhukov collected \$465,216 in prize money. The Russian was also presented with the ultimate symbol of achievement in the game of poker, the WSOP gold bracelet. This marked his first WSOP victory.

As is the case with just about every WSOP winner, Zhukov has a marvelous story en route to victory and riches. On Day One, he lost several pots in a row and was about to give up. Zhukov began the tourney with 30,000 in chips. Three hours into the tournament, he was down to just 2,000 – an embarrassingly-low figure that was, for most, a ticket to almost-certain elimination.

But something happened. Zhukov starting winning pots. By the end of the first day, he was back to where he started – with about 30,000 in chips. Day Two would prove to be a moving day when he climbed into the upper ranks. By the time the cards were dealt out at the final table, Zhukov had a shot to make poker history. And, he did just that.

The runner-up was George Lind, a tough poker pro from Chandler, AZ. Lind is one of online poker's most accomplished players. He has been known to play up to 40 tables/screens simultaneously. He was previously selected as the "Player of the Year" at one of the biggest online poker sites.

Lind had a 2-to-1 chip lead at one point when play was heads-up. But his final opponent proved just as tough and caught a wind of cards that ended up winning the tournament. Lind's consolation prize for finishing second amounted to \$287,554, which for a player with as much talent and ambition as Lind was like being given the keys to a red Ferrari with a flat tire.

This was the eleventh event (of 58) on this year's WSOP schedule. The tournament attracted 202 entries, which represented a slight decline from last year's number of participants – 212. This was only the third tournament that has showed a decline from 2010. Eight other events have been up, and three tournaments have been record-setting.

The total prize pool amounted to \$1,898,800. The top 27 finishers collected prize money. Among those who cashed were former WSOP gold bracelet winners Steve Billirakis (3rd), Richard Ashby (4th), Josh Arieh (9th), Michael Chow (13th), Brendan Taylor (14th), Mike Sexton (15th), Perry Green (17th), Freddy Deeb (20th), Eric Buchman (21st), and Jason Mercier (27th).

So far, this year's tournament series has produced several newcomers to WSOP stardom, including Zhukov. Remarkably, all of the first 11 gold bracelet winners have been first-time winners. In fact, several tournaments (five of 11) were won by players who had never previously finished in-the-money in any WSOP tournament.

Also of note was Guillaume Rivet's two strong finishes in both of this year's Omaha High-Low Split tournaments. The poker pro from Lorraine, Quebec, took 15th place in the largest live Omaha High-Low tournament in history, which ended last week. He also finished in sixth place in this event, stringing together two impressive showings that place him ahead in most Omaha categories.

For a list of all players who cashed, in EVENT #11, please click [here](#).

## EVENT #11 CHAMPION – VIACHESLAV ZHUKOV

The 2011 World Series of Poker \$10,000 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split World Champion is Viacheslav Zhukov, from Stary Oskol, Russia.

Zhukov was also born in Stary Oskol, which is located about 400 miles south of Moscow on the Oskol River.

Zhukov is a 22-year-old professional poker player. His name is alternatively spelled in some poker records as VYACHESLAV ZHUKOV.

Zhukov speaks English well. He is close to fluency.

The newest poker champion shares a name with Georgy Zhukov, who is the most decorated military commander in Russian history. Zhukov commanded the Red Army during World War II and was largely responsible for commanding forces that successfully defended Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad.

Zhukov graduated from Moscow Mining University. He holds a degree in geology.

Zhukov is single.

Zhukov started playing poker about five years ago. He planned to attend last year's WSOP for the first time, since he was of legal age (21). However, Zhukov graduated from college while the WSOP was in progress and decided instead to make the trip this year.

Zhukov is one of many Russian poker players who are becoming a formidable force in WSOP tournaments. Skill games have always been entwined deeply in Russian culture, which has been manifested in dominating competitions such as chess for centuries. Following his victory, Zhukov suggested that many young Russians are now turning to poker rather than chess (or are adding poker to their repertoire of skills). This is largely motivated by the lucrative prize structures of major tournaments, such as the WSOP.

Zhukov collected a \$465,216 for first place. He was also awarded his first WSOP gold bracelet.

Prior to this victory, Zhukov's biggest cash was at the European Poker Tour's event held in Kiev, in 2009.

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

Zhukov currently has \$465,216 in career WSOP winnings. He has an estimated \$600,000 in live tournament career winnings, according to several major popular websites. This does not include online play.

Zhukov becomes only the fourth player from Russia in history to win a WSOP gold bracelet. The three previous winners were Vitaly Lunkin (2 wins), Alex Kravchenko, and Ralph Perry (who now resides in the U.S.).

Zhukov is to be regarded as a poker pro, since he has been playing full-time for about one year.

**WINNER QUOTES** (*Note: The winner was interviewed at tableside moments after the victory*)

*On making an incredible comeback during the first day, when he was down to just 2,000 in chips, from his 30,000 starting stack size:* "I lost about 14 pots in a row. I was ready to go out. Nothing went my way. But I was patient and I started to get chips. I finished the day at 30,000 and then started to move (on Day Two)."

*On the tough competition he faced throughout the tournament:* "This was my first time to play the WSOP. But I had good experience playing online ... so, I can compete with the world's greatest."

*On his goals coming into this year's WSOP:* "It's very exciting to be here. Everything here is perfect. To be in Las Vegas is perfect. To be at the WSOP is perfect."

*On Russian poker players and the emerging reputation of his fellow countrymen:* "I think a lot of Russian players can't get here because they are under 21. But there are a lot of good players. Russian poker is really coming up and you will see a lot of big wins. In one or two years, more will come (to the WSOP)."

*On Russians being great chess masters and possible impacts upon the poker scene:* "I think chess and poker are similar games. But in poker you can win a lot more money. Young people now prefer to play poker. And, with the Internet it is easier. I think many Russian young people are concentrating on poker now."

## THE FINAL TABLE

The official final table was comprised nine players.

The final table contained three former gold bracelet winners – including Steve Billirakis, Richard Ashby, and Josh Arieh.

Five different nations were represented at the final table, making this the most international table played so far in 2011. Players represented the following countries -- Canada (1 player), Great Britain (1 player), Russia (1 player), Sweden (1 player), and the United States (5 players).

The heads-up match went for nearly four hours. This marks the third consecutive heads-up finale that has lasted that long.

The runner up was George Lind, from Chandler, AZ. He is best-known in the poker world for his online accomplishments. Lind has been known to play up to 40 tables at the same time. He was selected as the "Player of the Year" at one of the biggest online poker sites.

Lind had a 2-to-1 chip lead at one point when play was heads-up. But Zhukov proved just as tough and caught a wind of cards that gave him a 2-to-1 chip lead. Lind fought back and regained the lead at one point. But the escalation of blinds finally did Lind in, as he was unable to survive a late cold spell. Lind's consolation prize for finishing second amounted to \$287,554.

The third-place finisher was former WSOP gold bracelet winner Steve Billirakis, from Las Vegas, NV. He won the \$5,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em event in 2007, becoming the then-youngest WSOP title-holder in history (his record has since been broken). Billirakis now has 13 WSOP career cashes and has accumulated more than \$1 million in earnings.

Billirakis became only the second player so far at this year's WSOP with multiple top-10 finishes. The other player is Eddie Blumenthal, who had 4<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishes in the two events in which he cashed.

The fourth-place finisher was last year's gold bracelet winner: Richard Ashby, from Watford, UK. He won the \$1,500 buy-in Seven-Card Stud event in 2010. Ashby now has a 1<sup>st</sup>-, 2<sup>nd</sup>-, and 4<sup>th</sup>- place finish over the past two WSOPs. He now has five final table appearances in Omaha events played at the WSOP, since 2003.

The fifth-place finisher was Mack Lee, from Los Angeles, CA. He is a 51-year-old investor. This was Lee's best WSOP finish in his four cashes.

The sixth-place finisher was Guillaume Rivet, from Lorraine, Quebec (Canada). He is a 25-year-old poker pro. He recently graduated with a degree in finance from The University of Montreal. This marked Rivet's second time to cash this year at the WSOP, after taking 15<sup>th</sup> place in the previous Omaha High-Low Split tournament (\$1,500 buy-in).

The seventh-place finisher was Jason Steinberg, from Montebello, CA. A 32-year-old attorney, Steinberg is a graduate of Villanova Law School. This marked Steinberg's first time to cash at the WSOP.

The eighth-place finisher was Mikael Thuritz, from Stockholm, Sweden. He is a 25-year-old poker pro. Thuritz holds the distinction of having won one of the first "Speed Poker" championships, which was held at the European Poker Tour stop in Barcelona, Spain. Thuritz has a very impressive resume of big buy-in tournament finishes at the WSOP. He took 5<sup>th</sup> place in last year's \$25,000 buy-in Six-Handed Championship. He finished 13<sup>th</sup> in this same event last year. He also took 8<sup>th</sup> place in the \$50,000 buy-in Poker Players Championship. If that's not impressive enough, Thuritz also cashed in the WSOP Main Event Championship in 2006 and 2009. He took 41<sup>st</sup> in 2006, which was the largest live poker tournament in history, with 8,773 players.

The ninth-place finisher was two-time gold bracelet winner Josh Arieh, from Atlanta, GA. Arieh's last win on the big stage came back in 2005. He now has 18 WSOP cashes and nearly \$3.5 million in total WSOP winnings.

Final table play began at 10 pm on a Wednesday night. Play was suspended after five hours due to the maximum number of playing levels being reached for a single day (10 levels). Final table play resumed at 3 pm on Thursday. The finale went another 4.5 hours. Hence, the total duration of the final table lasted about 9 hours and 30 minutes.

The final table was played on two different stages. The first day took place on ESPN's main stage. The final day was played on the so-called "secondary stage," which is actually a cozier configuration for most spectators than the expansive main stage. The final table areas are getting raves in terms of design and appearance. No stage in the history of poker has ever looked as spectacular. Early reports from the television crew are that this year's preliminary footage looks "spectacular." Viewers will be able to see ESPN's coverage again once the WSOP Main Event begins.

Action was streamed live over WSOP.com. Viewers can tune in and watch most of this year's final tables. Although hole cards are not shown, viewers can follow an overhead camera as well as a pan-shot of the table. The floor announcer provides an official account of the action.

#### OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top 27 finishers collected prize money.

The defending champion was Sammy Farha, from Houston, TX. He did not cash this year.

Several former WSOP gold bracelet winners cashed in this event – including Steve Billirakis (3rd), Richard Ashby (4th), Josh Arieh (9th), Michael Chow (13th), Brendan Taylor (14th), Mike Sexton (15th), Perry Green (17th), Freddy Deeb (20th), Eric Buchman (21st), and Jason Mercier (27th).

Kirill Gerasimov continues to build an impressive WSOP resume. The Russian poker player cashed for the 15<sup>th</sup> time (all since 2003). He also has nine final table appearances. Based on his results, it seems only a matter of time before Gerasimov wins what would be his first gold bracelet.

Another player to watch is Italian poker pro Alessio Isaia. He finished 12<sup>th</sup> in this event. Isaia finished as the runner up in the Seven-Card Stud tournament (Event #5).

Popular television commentator, former gold bracelet winner, and member of the Poker Hall of Fame (Class of 2009) Mike Sexton finished in 15<sup>th</sup> place. With this finish, Sexton has now cashed at the WSOP for 23 consecutive years.

Tournament results are to be included in the WSOP official records. Results are also to be included in the 2011 WSOP "Player of the Year" race.

#### ODDS AND ENDS

This is the 904<sup>th</sup> gold bracelet awarded in World Series of Poker history. This figure includes every official WSOP event ever played, including tournaments during the early years when there were no actual gold bracelets awarded. It also includes the 16 gold bracelets awarded to date at WSOP Europe (2007-2010). Moreover for the first time ever, one gold bracelet was awarded for this year's winner of the WSOP Circuit National Championship.

This was one of the few tournaments this year with a decline in attendance. The 202-player field was a slight reduction from last year's number of runners: 212.

This was the second Omaha High-Low Split tournament played this year. The first event had a \$1,500 buy-in (classified as Event #3) and was the largest live Omaha High-Low Split tournament in history, with 925 players.

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

Zhukov's gold bracelet ceremony is set to take place on Friday, June 10th. The Russian National Anthem will be played in honor of his victory.

#### EVENT HISTORY

This was the third-largest Omaha High-Low Split prize pool in poker history. In fact, only seven Omaha events had ever surpassed the million-dollar mark. Here are the biggest Omaha High-Low Split prize pools in poker history:

2008 WSOP -- \$2,209,000 (\$10,000 buy-in)  
2010 WSOP -- \$1,992,800 (\$10,000 buy-in)  
2011 WSOP -- \$1,898,800 (\$10,000 buy-in)  
2009 WSOP -- \$1,682,600 (\$10,000 buy-in)  
2007 WSOP -- \$1,316,000 (\$5,000 buy-in)  
2006 WSOP -- \$1,245,000 (\$5,000 buy-in)

In 1983, the first Omaha-High tournament was introduced at the WSOP. The first Omaha High-Low Split tournament was played in 1990. During the 1990s, the WSOP schedule included Limit Omaha-High and Pot-Limit Omaha events. Limit Omaha-High has gradually faded in popularity since, and the game was removed from the WSOP schedule after 2003, while Omaha High-Low Split continues to generate a steady following.

Here are the attendance figures for the last three Omaha High-Low championship events, since the buy-in was raised to \$10,000. Prior to 2008, the highest buy-in Omaha High-Low tournament was \$5,000:

2011 – 202 entries  
2010 – 212 entries  
2009 – 179 entries  
2008 – 235 entries

Only five players in WSOP history have won two gold bracelets in Omaha High-Low Split. They are Thang Luu, Scott Clements, Scotty Nguyen, Chris “Jesus” Ferguson and Sammy Farha.

Brent Carter and Berry Johnston are currently tied for the lead in the “Most Omaha Cashes” category in WSOP history – with 20 each.

#### TOURNAMENT PLAY

The tournament was originally scheduled to be played over three consecutive days, but extended to four days due to the length of the final table.

The tournament officially began on Monday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM. The tournament officially ended on Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 pm.

#### 2011 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of Event #11, the 2011 WSOP has attracted 10,724 entries; \$22,082,800 in prize money has been awarded to winners, so far.

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

United States (8)  
Great Britain (2)  
Russia (1)

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

United States (6)  
Great Britain (2)  
Ukraine (1)  
Israel (1)  
Russia (1)

Through the conclusion of this event, the home-states of (American) winners have been:

Nevada (2)  
California (1)  
Illinois (1)  
New York (1)  
New Jersey (1)

Florida (1)

Texas (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 (8): Jake Cody, Cheech Barbaro, Eugene Katchalov, Allen Bari, Harrison Wilder, Matt Perrins, Sean Getzwiller, Viacheslav Zhukov

Semi-Pros (2): Sean R. Drake, Amir Lehavot

Amateurs (1): Geoffrey Klein

All of the first 11 tournaments completed so far have been won by first-time champions (non-winners from previous years).

Five of the first 11 winners this year also enjoyed their first-ever WSOP cash with their victory.

Every WSOP over the past 11 years has included at least one multiple gold bracelet champion (wins within the same year). 1999 was the last year the WSOP was comprised exclusively of single-event winners. The record for most multiple gold bracelet winners in a single year was in 2009, when five players managed to win two or more titles.

The streak of male WSOP gold bracelet winners has now reached 173 consecutive events. Aside from the annual Ladies Championship, the last female player to win a WSOP tournament open to both sexes was Vanessa Selbst, in 2008.

The highest finish by a female player (open events) at this year's WSOP was Maria Ho, who finished second (\$5,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em).

*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: [WSOP.com](http://WSOP.com)*