



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

Official Report
Event #15
Pot-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In: \$1,500
Number of Entries: 765
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,032,750
Number of Places Paid: 72
First Place Prize: \$227,232
June 9-11, 2011

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES:

You Won't Believe What Happened to Brian Rast

Cash-Game Pro Wins Pot-Limit Hold'em Championship

Rast Collects First WSOP Gold Bracelet

New Pot-Limit Hold'em Champion Wins \$227,232 Top Prize

Allen "Chainsaw" Kessler Finishes as Runner Up

2011 WSOP Attendance Remains Ahead of Last Year

15 Gold Bracelets Won – 43 More Still Up For Grabs

OVERVIEW

"The Butterfly Effect" is a well-known term which seeks to explain the unbreakable bonds between all universal matter. The phrase was initially coined as a relatively simple way to illustrate a far more complex scientific concept.

The hypothetical question posed was, "Does a butterfly flapping its wings in Kansas eventually create a typhoon in the South Pacific?" Even a fragile butterfly has a measurable effect on air current by flapping its tiny wings. It follows then, that a storm cycle occurring many months later, thousands of miles away, is one of the many outlying by-products of the butterfly's initial action.

"The Butterfly Effect" applies to poker, too. Unfortunately, many fail to grasp its nuances. Even the most subtle actions can affect the ultimate outcome of a poker tournament. Consider for a moment that any motion whatsoever – a laugh, a sneeze, a smile, a wave, or even the most ordinary of common distractions – can and often will cause a poker dealer to shuffle a deck of cards in a slightly different way. Just one card out of place at any time, by consequence, changes the entire sequence of cards that follow the remainder of the tournament.

Got that?

If you're wondering what any of this has to do with the most recent tournament held at the World Series of Poker, we'll get to that in a moment.

Since the actions at one table are very likely seen and heard by players at adjoining tables, even subtle movements, increasingly larger numbers of people are affected by the initial motion. Secondary tables feel the aftereffects of what happened. Moments later, the next outlying group of tables and players facilitate an unbreakable line of countless corollaries, which in a sense not only change the outcome of what happens in poker, but impact the world.

Sure, we all agree – poker is a game of skill. But it's also quite possible that an innocuous chuckle on Day One by the hypothetical player on sitting in Seat 6 at Table 278 Blue at the 2011 World Series of Poker influenced the outcome of the tournament. In a sense, every single champion's victory is a combination of billions upon billions of figurative butterfly wings flapping since the beginning of time, combined with the skill, talent, and – dare it be said, luck – to overcome randomness.

Which now brings us to Brian Rast.

Four days ago, he was in Brazil at the end of a long vacation. That's right – Brazil. As in South America. Following a two-month stay with his fiancé, Rast flew back to the U.S., where he landed in Las Vegas on the morning of Thursday, June 9th. He arrived home on a red-eye flight and was dragging his bags down the hallway of his high-rise condo about 9 am, when he ran into neighbor, friend, and, as it turned out, guardian angel who flapped his own proverbial wings making a typhoon out of what would have been an innocuous initial act.

The guardian angel, inspiration, and butterfly who would later create a tremor at the Rio was Antonio Esfandiari.

Rast and Esfandiari got to talking that morning. When Esfandiari found out Rast had no intention of playing in the upcoming [\\$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Hold'em Championship](#), to be held at noon, he made his good friend an offer he could not possibly refuse. Esfandiari agreed to bankroll Rast and put him in the tournament in exchange for a chunk of his action. And so, off to the Rio Rast went.

Three days later, Rast was awarded his very first WSOP gold bracelet and \$227,232, some of which was shared with a certain railbird watching with intense interest.

As Rast was busy posing for photographers in front of a massive pile of poker chips and was being interviewed by the press moments after his unlikely victory, several poker players who were involved in other poker tournaments across the room glanced over at the newest WSOP champion. Dozens of conversations ensued. Shuffles were altered. And all of poker history changed forever.

For a complete recap of Event #15, please visit the WSOP.com tournament portal page [HERE](#).

EVENT #15 CHAMPION – BRIAN RAST

The 2011 World Series of Poker \$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Hold'em champion is Brian Rast, from Poway, CA. He also owns a condo in Las Vegas at Panorama Towers, which is home to many of the world's top poker pros.

Rast is 29-years-old. He was born in Denver, CO.

Rast left Stanford University before graduating. He is a professional poker player. Rast has enjoyed the support of his family since he initially made the decision to try and make it as a pro.

Rast is now engaged to his fiancé, who resides in Brazil. He hopes to bring her to the U.S. immediately following the conclusion of the WSOP.

Rast has enjoyed some tournament success. But he is noted primarily for his cash-game prowess. Rast has played nosebleed stakes and is well-respected by those who know the cash game culture.

Rast's favorite poker game is Omaha.

Rast was cheered to victory by several family and friends. They posed with him in the official winner's photograph, taken after the victory.

Rast collected a \$227,232 for first place. He was also awarded his first WSOP gold bracelet.

According to official records, Rast now has 1 win, 2 final table appearances, and 6 in-the-money finishes at the WSOP.

Rast currently has \$506,553 in career WSOP winnings.

Rast is to be regarded as a poker pro, since he has been playing full-time very successfully for eight years.

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

On how he journeyed from Brazil to Las Vegas and ultimately to a WSOP gold bracelet: *"I went to Brazil a year and a half ago with (poker pro) Phil Laak, and we were down there. I had four days left on my trip to Rio de Janeiro and I found the woman of my dreams. Her name is Juliana. She is Brazilian and has never been to the United States. We fell in love in four days and after I left we stayed in touch. I was like, 'Oh, I'll just get you a travel visa to come to the United States so you can live with me and we can date and stuff.' But the first tourist visa was rejected. So, we tried to get her an academic visa and it was rejected. Finally, during this whole time I decided I was going to go back to Brazil after the World Series of Poker. It's going to be like my ninth trip to Brazil and I spend a lot of time there. I've gone on like one or two other trips already to be with her. We just kind of fell in love and didn't want to let that go. Despite the fact the U.S. government made it kind of difficult in getting a visa, about six or seven months ago we started the process for a fiancé visa. Our interview is on July 15th (during the middle of the WSOP Main Event).....I didn't know a lot about immigration and now I know a lot about it and it's absolutely absurd. In order to have the woman I love come over, we have to go through this whole process."*

On what it means to win a WSOP gold bracelet when asked if it validates him as a player: *"Yeah, it does. You know, I haven't been a hardcore tournament player during my career. But at this point after seven years, I've racked up a decent number of tournaments between the 10K WPTs and WSOP events. So yeah, it means a lot to me that I was finally able to take one down. Even though I'm up in terms of cashes, I had a really big one in the 40k event; it was nice to win. It's different because you're almost always disappointed in a tournament, unless you win. So, you know it's hard the way the payouts jump so much in the end. Say I came in 12th, it was like 120K, which is great – but the thing is it starts jumping more and more where first place is like \$2 million. It can get a little demoralizing to go through it again and again. Honestly, I've played cash games where I've lost more in a pot than I have in this tournament. So it's not really about the money. I like winning the money, but for this tournament the bracelet really does mean a lot. It's something I've finally accomplished in my poker career. I feel like I'm pretty well known in the poker community of professionals who respect my game, but now maybe people who haven't heard will recognize me. I think respect from your peers is pretty important and everyone wants respect from people within their profession and a bracelet kind of gives you that recognition."*

On playing against and ultimately defeating Allen "Chainsaw" Kessler, one of the game's more interesting personalities: *"Our heads-up match was pretty quiet. We pretty much just got down to playing. It was cool, kind of a struggle for a while. I just kind of chipped away and it went back-and-forth for a while."*

On his future plans and whether he expects to be playing poker in the next 10-15 years: *"My goal for doing this, at this point I've been playing for quite a while and really it's the only skill I have. I think I've developed it to the point to be pretty profitable. Even though online has gotten tougher. My goal is to use poker to make enough money where I can be financially set. Starting a family now, I want to take poker to a place where I can take care of those things and eventually along the way I would like to maybe have some other sources of income happen. I feel like I kind of made this decision when I dropped out of college, I kind of wanted to work for myself. Instead of using my degree to work my way up the corporate ladder, that just never appealed to me. I just hope one day I can branch out, but honestly I'll always play poker. There are times where I have gotten a little tired of it, but whenever I step away from it for a little while I find myself eager to get back to it."*

THE FINAL TABLE

The official final table was comprised nine players.

The final table contained only one former gold bracelet winners – Ted Lawson.

Three different nations were represented at the final table. Players represented the following countries: Finland (1 player), Japan (1 player) and the United States (7 players).

When play began, the final table chip leader was Brian Rast. However, Allen “Chainsaw” Kessler was close behind. The stacks of the remaining seven players were all covered by 2-to-1 more by the chip leader.

The runner up was Allen “Chainsaw” Kessler, one of poker’s most colorful characters. Kessler plays the tournament circuit year-round. He has accumulated more than \$2.3 million in overall tournament winnings. Second place paid \$140,309. Kessler holds at least one notable WSOP record. He is only player in history to cash in seven different games within one year of the WSOP, which was set in 2010. Kessler is a graduate of Temple University in his native Philadelphia.

The third-place finisher was Dajuan Whorley, from Accokeek, MD. He is a real estate builder and developer. This marked his first time to cash at the WSOP following two WSOP Circuit in-the-money finishes in recent years.

The fourth-place finisher was Daisuke Endo, from Japan. Endo’s finish was one of the top in history by any player from the nation of Japan.

The fifth-place finisher was Mika Paasonen, from Jandkkala, Finland. He is a 33-year-old poker pro. Paasonen’s best previous showing was a second-place finish in a No-Limit event two years ago. He had four cashes at the 2009 WSOP. Paasonen became a proud father for the second time just two weeks before this year’s WSOP started.

The sixth-place finisher was Ali Eslami, from Van Nuys, CA. Eslami is a high-stakes cash game pro who plays mostly in the Los Angeles card clubs. Eslami is having a big year so far, having won the nationally-televised WSOP Circuit Western Regional Championship, held at Harrah’s Rincon (San Diego) three months ago. Eslami now has three WSOP cashes this year – including two final table appearances. He took seventh place in the \$1,500 buy-in Seven-Card Stud event held last week.

The seventh-place finisher was John Gordon, from Clearwater, FL

The eighth-place finisher was former gold bracelet winner Ted Lawson, from Henderson, NV. Lawson’s WSOP victory took place in 2004 in what was at the time his first-ever WSOP cash. He has since gone on to cash 21 times and win nearly \$1 million in prize money.

The ninth-place finisher was Ronald Lee, from Brooklyn, NY.

Final table play began at 3:30 pm on a Saturday afternoon. Play ended at 9:20 pm on Saturday night. The finale went about 5 hours and 50 minutes. This was the shortest final table of any of the 15 now-completed events.

The final table was played on ESPN’s so-called secondary stage. The Main Stage hosted the star-studded No-Limit Deuce-to-Seven Lowball World Championship, which was played simultaneously (won by John Juanda).

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 72 finishers collected prize money.

Among the former gold bracelet winners who cashed in this event were – Ted Lawson (8th), Hoyt Corkins (49th) and Matthew Hawrilenko (62nd).

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.

“WSOP Player of the Year” standings can be found at WSOP.com [HERE](#).

ODDS AND ENDS

This is the 908th 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.

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.

Rast's gold bracelet ceremony is set to take place on Sunday, June 12th. The national anthem of the USA will be played in honor of his victory.

EVENT HISTORY

Pot-Limit poker made its WSOP debut in 1984, when two Pot-Limit Omaha tournaments were offered. There were no Pot-Limit tournaments of any kind played at the WSOP from 1970 through 1983.

The only Pot-Limit game which was played at the WSOP between 1984 and 1991 was Pot-Limit Omaha. At the time, Pot-Limit Hold'em action was restricted to cash games.

The first Pot-Limit Hold'em tournament at the WSOP took place in 1992. The game has been a fixture on the WSOP schedule ever since, with multiple tournaments offered.

Remarkably, no player has ever won more than one WSOP gold bracelet in Pot-Limit Hold'em. There are now 49 players with exactly one gold bracelet (each) in this form of poker.

The player with the most career WSOP cashes in Pot-Limit Hold'em events at the WSOP is Jason Lester with 9. Chris "Jesus" Ferguson, T.J. Cloutier and Ken Flaton each have 8.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

The tournament was played over three consecutive days.

The tournament officially began on Thursday, June 9th at noon. The tournament officially ended on Saturday, June 11th, at 9:20 pm.

2011 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of Event #15, the 2011 WSOP has attracted 14,606 entries. \$27,786,560 in prize money has been awarded to winners, to date.

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

- United States (11)
- Great Britain (2)
- Russia (1)
- Canada (1)

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

- United States (8)
- Great Britain (2)
- Ukraine (1)
- Israel (1)
- Russia (1)
- Honduras (1)
- Canada (1)

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

Nevada (2)
California (2)
Illinois (1)
New York (1)
New Jersey (1)
Florida (1)
Texas (1)
Tennessee (1)
Connecticut (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 (12): Jake Cody, Cheech Barbaro, Eugene Katchalov, Allen Bari, Harrison Wilder, Matt Perrins, Sean Getzwiller, Viacheslav Zhukov, David Diaz, Andrew Badecker, Tyler Bonkowski, Brian Rast

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

Amateurs (1): Geffrey Klein

All of the first 15 tournaments completed so far have been won by first-time champions (non-winners from previous years).

Five of the first 15 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.

For every year which includes 15 or more events on the WSOP schedule, all years except one had crowned a double bracelet winner by this time. The exception was in 2008, when it took 18 events to celebrate a winner that had previous won. Mike Matusow was the breakthrough victor that year.

The streak of male WSOP gold bracelet winners has now reached 176 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 longest "cold" streak for female players occurred between years 1982 and 1996, when 221 consecutive open events passed without a female champion.

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

For official news and the latest updates from the 2011 World Series of Poker, visit: WSOP.com