



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

Official Report  
Event #36  
No-Limit Hold'em  
Buy-In: \$2,500  
Number of Entries: 1,734  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$3,944,850  
Number of Places Paid: 171  
First Place Prize: \$749,610  
June 21-23, 2011

### **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES:**

Mikhail Lakhitov Conquers the West

Russian Wins \$2,500 Buy-In No-Limit Hold'em Championship

Former Red Army Officer Scoops \$749,610 in Prize Money

Wild Final Table at WSOP – International Poker Party Goes Around the Clock

Full House at the 2011 WSOP-- Tournament Attendance Running Ahead of Last Year

36 Gold Bracelets Won – 22 More Still to Go

### **OVERVIEW**

Perhaps you just *had* to be there to understand.

Maybe there's no way to reconstruct the raucous and rowdy atmosphere surrounding the most recent World Series of Poker tournament, which just ended at the Rio in Las Vegas.

Think of an international soccer match headed into overtime. Think of a heavyweight prize fight in the midst of the final round. Think of a jam-packed bar, during happy hour.

That was the setting around the final table of the \$2,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament, which concluded amidst one of the most festive finales witnessed in recent memory at the WSOP.

One media member, accustomed to covering dozens of WSOP finales over the last few years candidly remarked, "The energy is like nothing I've ever seen at the WSOP! Trouble is, it's giving me a headache!"

Another player, sitting in an unrelated tournament about 100 feet from the constant chanting said, "I thought this was poker. Not a scene from animal house."

Yet another bystander -- aligned with one of the opposing players said, "Can't you do something to make them all shut up?"

That pretty much said it all.

Nearly lost in the celebratory atmosphere was some exceptional poker playing, most of it performed by a Russian poker pro named Mikhail Lakhitov.

For his victory, Lakhitov won the most prized symbol of achievement in the game – the WSOP gold bracelet. The professional poker player from Cheboksary (Russia) overcame a huge starting field totaling 1,734 entrants. It took him four days to finally defeat his final challenger en route to a payout totaling \$749,610 in prize money for first place. That comes out to a cool \$187,000 a day. Nice work if you can get it.

The new champion is hardly a one-hit wonder. With this victory, Lakhitov cashed for fifth time at this year's WSOP. He now has nearly \$1 million in lifetime earnings and has taken over the WSOP Player of the Year lead from Phil Hellmuth.

Perhaps the greatest irony of the tournament's final outcome and the winner's story of triumph is his unusual background. Prior to playing poker for a living, Lakhitov was on active duty in the Red Army. During his down time, Lakhitov learned about a new game called poker. He spent many hours thinking about the game, and playing with his fellow comrades. When he was discharged from the military Lakhitov decided to try and make it as a pro. He's hasn't regretted the decision, since.

Another irony is that Lakhitov's first visit to the WSOP was last year. He did not even know there was such a thing as a gold bracelet attached to each victory. When Lakhitov found out there was a luminous gold prize that came along with each championship, he vowed to win a gold bracelet and present it to his wife.

Mrs. Lakhitov should be very proud indeed, when he returns with a homecoming gift.

The runner up was Hassan Babjane, from Boston, MA. He settled for second place, which paid \$463,480 -- an incredible accomplishment considering this is his first time to cash at the WSOP.

Among former gold bracelet winners who cashed in this tournament were: David "Dragon" Pham (37th), Andrew Cohen (49th), David Diaz (89th) and J.C. Tran (151st).

*For a comprehensive recap of Event #36, please visit the WSOP.com tournament portal page [HERE](#).*

### **EVENT #36 CHAMPION – MIKHAIL LAKHITOV**

The 2011 World Series of Poker \$2,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em champion is Mikhail Lakhitov, from Cheboksary, Russia.

Lakhitov is a 30-year-old professional poker player.

Lakhitov was born in Cheboksary, which is the capital of the Chuvash Republic, a province in Russia. Cheboksary is located on the Volga River.

Prior to playing poker for a living, Lakhitov was enlisted in the Russian Army. He was stationed in Moscow. One of his friends in the Army was Kirill Gerasimov, who would himself go on to a successful poker career.

This marks the second straight year Lakhitov has attended the WSOP. He cashed twice in 2010. This was his fifth time to cash in 2011.

For his victory, Lakhitov collected \$749,610 for first place.

According to official records, Lakhitov now has 1 win, 2 final table appearances, and 7 in-the-money finishes at the WSOP.

Lakhitov currently has \$898,423 in career WSOP winnings.

This was Lakhitov's fifth cash this year – which places him amongst the leaders in that category.

Lakhitov is to be classified as a professional poker player (in WSOP records and stats), since he has been a full-time player for the past five years.

### **WINNER INTERVIEW (via translator)**

*On how he learned how to play poker when he was enlisted in the Russian Army:*

“I had so much free time, that I started playing many different kinds of games. One of the games I learned was poker.”

*On being a Russian poker champion:*

“I am very proud of that. I like to show that I am from Russia. It makes me very proud.”

*On what motivated him to win:*

“Last year in 2010, I finished near the top in one tournament and came in eighth place. I did not know there was such a thing as a gold bracelet. Later, I saw there were pictures with the winner and the bracelet. So, this year on my way to Las Vegas, I promised to my lovely wife that I would win a gold bracelet. That was my motivation.”

*On who will now wear the WSOP gold bracelet:*

“My wife, of course. It will be my gift to her.”

## **THE FINAL TABLE**

The official final table was comprised of the top nine finishers.

The final table contained no former gold bracelet winners. This was the ninth final table so far this year which has no former WSOP title holders. When David Pham went out in 37<sup>th</sup> place, a first-time champion was guaranteed.

Three nations were represented at the final table – Great Britain (1 player), Russia (1 player) and the United States (7 players).

The runner up was Hassan Babjane, from Boston, MA. This was his first time to cash at the WSOP. He made this one count to the tune of \$463,480 in prize money.

The third-place finisher was Thomas Middleton, from Slidsen, UK.

The fourth-place finisher was Thomas Miller, from E. Hampton, NY. He is a former architect-turned-poker pro.

The fifth-place finisher was Ed Sabat, from Los Angeles, CA. He is a USC graduate and poker pro. He has numerous major cashes and wins on the tournament circuit.

The sixth-place finisher was Matthew Berkey, from Las Vegas, NV. He is a poker pro with a degree in computer science.

The seventh-place finisher was James St. Hilaire, from Glen Burnie, MD. He is a 25-year-old poker pro. St. Hilaire now has five WSOP cashes. This was his first final table appearance and best finish yet.

The eighth-place finisher was Conrad Monica, from Hemet, CA. He is a casino dealer who has quite an impressive record for a semi-pro. Monica cashed for the third time this year. It was also his eighth career cash at the WSOP. Monica previously won a WSOP Circuit gold ring at Harrah's Rincon (San Diego).

The ninth-place finisher was Kent (Lloyd) Padgett, from Spring, TX. He is a 67-year-old oil field technician. Proving it's never too late to try and make a mark as a poker player, this was his first time to cash at the WSOP.

Final table play began at 9:30 pm on a Thursday night. Play concluded about 7 hours later (in playing time), at 3:45 pm, the following day. Play was suspended when there were five players still remaining because of the late hour on Day Three.

When final table play began, Thomas Miller was the chip leader. However, Mikhail Lakhitov and James St. Hilaire were both close behind.

The final table included multiple cheering sections for several players. They were often chanting and screaming for their favorite player.

The final table was played on ESPN's so-called secondary stage. The main stage hosted the conclusion of the \$10,000 HORSE tournament, which was played at the same time. The finale (on the second day of the final table) was moved to the main stage. The new final table set this year is getting raves in terms of design and appearance. No stage in the history of poker has ever looked as spectacular. Viewers will be able to see ESPN's coverage again once the WSOP Main Event begins in July.

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 171 finishers collected prize money.

Among former gold bracelet winners who cashed in this tournament -- aside from the players who made the final table -- were: David "Dragon" Pham (37<sup>th</sup>), Andrew Cohen (49<sup>th</sup>), David Diaz (89<sup>th</sup>) and J.C. Tran (151<sup>st</sup>).

Tournament results are to be included in all official WSOP 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](#). Lakhitov is the current leader.

### **ODDS AND ENDS**

This tournament attracted 1,734 entries.

This is the 928<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.

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.

Lakhitov's gold bracelet ceremony is set to take place on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. The national anthem of Russia will be played in honor of his victory -- for the second time this year.

### **TOURNAMENT PLAY**

The tournament was scheduled to be played over three consecutive days/nights -- which ran into an unscheduled fourth day due to the late finish.

Day One began with 1,734 entries and ended with 296 survivors.

Day Two began with 296 players and ended with 39 survivors.

Day Three began with 39 players, which played down to 5 players.

Day Four began with 5 players and played down to the winner.

The tournament officially began on Tuesday, June 21<sup>st</sup> at noon. The tournament officially ended early Friday afternoon, June 25<sup>th</sup>, at 3:45 pm.

### **2011 WSOP STATISTICS**

Through the conclusion of Event #36 the 2011 WSOP has attracted 46,839 combined total entries. \$73,295,910 in prize money has been awarded to winners.

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

United States (24)  
Canada (4)  
Great Britain (3)  
France (2)  
Russia (2)  
Ukraine (1)

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

United States (19)  
Canada (4)  
Great Britain (3)  
France (2)  
Ukraine (2)  
Russia (2)  
Israel (1)  
Honduras (1)  
Indonesia (1)  
Germany (1)

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

California (5)  
Nevada (3)  
New York (3)  
Texas (2)  
Illinois (2)  
Florida (2)  
New Jersey (1)  
Tennessee (1)  
Connecticut (1)  
Indiana (1)  
Maryland (1)  
Virginia (1)  
Michigan (1)

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the breakdown of professional poker players to semi-pros and amateurs who won gold bracelets has been:

Professional Players (28): Jake Cody, Cheech Barbaro, Eugene Katchalov, Allen Bari, Harrison Wilder, Matt Perrins, Sean Getzwiller, Viacheslav Zhukov, David Diaz, Andrew Badecker, Tyler Bonkowski, Brian Rast, John Juanda, Aaron Steury, Darren Woods, Jason Somerville, Bertrand Gropellier, John Monnette, Elie Payon, Mark Radoja, Chris Viox, Dan Idema, Andy Frankenberger, Chris Lee, Sam Stein, Mark Schmid, Jason Mercier and Mikhail Lakhitov

Semi-Pros (4): Sean R. Drake, Amir Lehavot, Oleksii Kovalchuk, Eric Rosawig

Amateurs (4): Geoffrey Klein, Foster Hays, James Hess, Kirk Caldwell

Since tracking first started in 2005, this year's WSOP has the greatest disparity of professionals winning over semi-pros and amateurs than any year recorded, so far – with 30 out of 36 events being won by pros or semi-pros.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the victories of 8 of the 36 winners (21 percent) marked the first time the new champion had ever cashed at the WSOP.

Every WSOP held over the past 11 years has included at least one multiple gold bracelet champion (meaning two or more wins within the same year). The last year the WSOP was comprised exclusively of single-event winners was back in 1999. The record for most multiple gold bracelet winners within a single

year was in 2009, when five players managed to win two or more titles. So far, no player has yet won two gold bracelets (this year).

The streak of consecutive male WSOP gold bracelet winners has now reached 195 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 any female (open events) at this year's WSOP was by two players -- Maria Ho, who finished second (\$5,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em) and Kim Nguyen, who also finished as the runner up (\$1,500 buy-in Six-Handed Limit Hold'em).

The highest finish by any defending champion at this year's WSOP was by David Baker, who finished in sixth place after winning the previous \$10,000 buy-in No-Limit Deuce-to-Seven Draw Lowball World Championship.

New tournament records set at the 2011 WSOP (to date):

- Biggest Heads-Up tournament prize pool in history (\$3,040,000) – Event #2
- Largest live Omaha High-Low Split Tournament in history (925 entries) – Event #3
- Largest live Six-Handed tournament in poker history (1,920 entries) – Event #10
- Biggest Deuce-to-Seven tournament prize pool in history (\$1,184,400) – Event #16
- Largest live \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament in history with single day start (3157 entries) – Event #18
- Largest live \$1,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament in history with single day start (3175 entries) – Event #20
- Largest consecutive-days starting field sizes in poker history (combined 6,332 entries) – Event #18 and Event #20
- Largest live Pot-Limit Omaha tournament in poker history (1,071 entries) – Event #22
- Largest Mixed-Game (Eight-Game Mix) in poker history (489 entries) – Event #23
- Largest Seniors tournament in poker history (3,752 entries) – Event #30
- Biggest Seniors No-Limit Hold'em championship prize pool in history (\$3,376,800) – Event #30
- Largest single-day live tournament start in poker history (3,752 entries) – Event #30
- Largest consecutive-days starting field sizes in poker history (combined 6,580 entries) – Event #30/Event #32 (broke Event #18/Event #20 record from earlier in 2011 WSOP)
- Largest four-consecutive days field sizes in poker history (2,500+3,752+2,828+3,144 =12,224 entries) -- Events 28, 30, 32, 34, June 16-19, 2011

New player records set at the 2011 WSOP (to date):

The 35-year span between Artie Cobb's first cash in this event (1976) and most recent cash in the same event (2011) represents the longest time span in WSOP history. He accomplished this in Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split (Event #25).  
Phil Hellmuth added to his record as the individual all-time leader in cashes (81) and final table appearances (42).

## **RAISING AWARENESS: BAD BEAT ON CANCER AND THE WSOP**

Bad Beat on Cancer was created in 2003 by Phil Gordon and Rafe Furst as an easy and fun way for poker players to donate to the Prevent Cancer Foundation. It all began when Chris MoneyMaker pledged 1 percent of his 2003 Main Event winnings and went on to capture the championship, contributing \$25,000 when he was awarded the \$2,500,000 first- place prize. By taking the pledge, wearing the patch, and joining 'Team 1%', players can feel good supporting a cause that only benefits when they win. As the official charity of the WSOP, pledges simply indicate to the payouts staff that they are donating 1 percent of their winnings, and the funds are automatically withheld. A tax receipt is generated and sent to their mailing address. Several high profile professionals have made 'life pledges' of 1 percent of all their winnings -- including Annie Duke, Phil Hellmuth Jr., Lee Childs, Paul Wasicka, Andy Bloch, Dennis Phillips, and others. Since 2003, the initiative has raised over \$3,500,000 for cancer prevention research, education, and community outreach programs. Players can pick up a patch and join Team 1% by stopping by the Bad Beat on Cancer booth, located at the 2011 WSOP opposite the Amazon Room in the concourse. The Nevada Cancer Institute based in Las Vegas is a benefiting charity from the Bad Beat on Cancer.

*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)*

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