



**2012 World Series of Poker Presented by Jack Link's Beef Jerky  
Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada**

**Official Report  
Event #2  
No-Limit Hold'em  
Buy-In: \$1,500  
Number of Entries: 2,101  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$2,836,350  
Number of Places Paid: 216  
First Place Prize: \$517,725  
May 28-30, 2012**

## **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES**

The Million-Dollar Man

Brent Hanks Wins \$517,725 and WSOP Gold Bracelet – Nears \$1 Million in WSOP Earnings

29-Year-Old Poker Pro Tops Field of 2,101 Entrants

Three Former Gold Bracelet Winners Fall Short – Andrew Badecker 3<sup>rd</sup>, Vanessa Selbst 4<sup>th</sup> and JP Kelly 8<sup>th</sup>

Vanessa Selbst Misses Shot to Break Female Win Slump – Male Winners at 221 Events and Counting

Another Cash for Phil Hellmuth – All-Time Career Cashes Leader Pads His Lead.

Two Gold Bracelets Won – 59 More at Stake!

## **TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW**

Las Vegas, NV (May 30, 2012) – The first World Series of Poker tournament of the year open to all players concluded tonight with the crowning of a new poker champion.

Brent Hanks, from Las Vegas, won the first \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament of 2012, which has proven to be one of the schedule's most popular events. Hanks, a 29-year-old professional poker player, collected a whopping \$517,725 in prize money. He was also presented with his first WSOP gold bracelet, which is the ultimate prize in poker. Prior to playing for a living, Hanks was a fifth-grade school teacher. He is a graduate of St. Bonaventure University.

Hanks' victory was memorable on several fronts. First, he had to overcome a huge field size. Second, he was down by a 2 to 1 margin when playing heads-up against a very formidable opponent -- Jacob Bazeley, from Ludlow, KY. Oddly enough, the two finalists were both the same age and worked as school teachers at once time during their lives. They were also friends who hung out together at dinner and on breaks at various times during the tournament.

But what was most incredible was Hanks' unthinkable comeback during Day Two. At one point when players has just reached the money, Hanks was down to a just a single small blind and ante. He was all-in before the cards were dealt and then won the hand. Hanks went on to win four of the next five hands and then gradually rebuilt his stack. By day's end, he was not only back in contention, he was one of the chip leaders entering the final stages of the tournament -- proving once again that just about anything is possible in a poker tournament.

As things turned out, that small blind situation on Day Two ended up being a half-million dollar hand. Think about that, next time you are struggling to stay alive in a WSOP event and are losing hope.

With this victory, Hanks has accumulated nearly \$1 million in career winnings in WSOP events alone. This was his 12th time to cash at the WSOP, a remarkable feat given his young age. In fact, all of Hanks' WSOP earnings have been achieved since 2008.

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #2, since it's the second gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Memorial Day, and concluding late Wednesday.

Just prior to the start of the Rio's first event, WSOP Tournament Director Jack Effel took the main stage and began things in grand style. Prior to the Memorial Day start, veterans were recognized in a brief service held inside Brasilia. The national anthem was also played to commemorate the national holiday.

Performing the official "Shuffle Up and Deal" honors was poker player "Captain" Tom Franklin, a two-time WSOP gold bracelet winner and former United States Marine Corps and Vietnam War veteran. He acknowledged veterans at this year's WSOP, by asking them to stand and be recognized. The crowd gave the vets a nice ovation.

The tournament began with 2,101 players. After the first day, only 239 players survived. The second day included the field being further reduced to the last 15 players. Once the final table was reached on Wednesday, players were moved to the Pavilion Main Stage, which is the new setting for final table action – aside from those that take place on the ESPN Main Stage (since many events overlap, multiple final table areas are necessary).

The tournament prize pool totaled \$2,836,350. The top 216 finishers were paid. Event #2 OFFICIAL RESULTS can be seen here: <http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=887&tid=12102>

Among those who made deep runs were former gold bracelet winners Andrew Badecker (3rd), Vanessa Selbst (4th) and J.P. Kelly (8th).

In a bit of irony, Vanessa Selbst had a chance to end what is now a record-matching drought for female poker players. She came close to becoming the first female gold bracelet champion in an open event since 2008, when -- of all people -- *Selbst herself* won the \$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha championship. With yet another stag winner, the longest void gap has now been matched in WSOP history. The longest streak had been 221 straight events, between 1982 and 1996 -- which will now be surpassed.

Also of special note was Phil Hellmuth's 61st-place finish. He continues to add stature and distance to his legacy, with what amounts to the 86th WSOP cash of his career -- by far, the all-time leader.

Hanks hereby became the second player to win a gold bracelet at this year's WSOP, after Chip Saechao won the Casino Employees Championship opener.

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## **MEET NEW WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION – BRENT HANKS**

Name: Brent Hanks

Birthplace: Fillmore, New York (USA)

Current Residence: Las Vegas, Nevada (USA)

Age: 29

Marital Status: Single

Education: Graduate of St. Bonaventure University

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Length of Time as a Full-Time Pro: 5 years

Prior Occupation: School Teacher (fifth grade)

Number of WSOP Cashes: 12

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 4

Number of WSOP gold bracelet victory (with this tournament): 1

Best Previous WSOP finish: 4<sup>th</sup> in \$2,500 buy-in Eight-Game Mix in 2011

Total WSOP Earnings: \$932,244

Other Interesting Facts: Reportedly won \$3 million playing online poker and is now playing more live tournaments due to changes in the poker landscape.

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**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

“Vanessa Selbst was the best player at the (final) table.”

-- Brent Hanks, moments after his victory

**WINNER QUOTES (POST-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW)**

**Question:** What does it feel like to finally win a gold bracelet, after getting so close a number of times?

**Hanks:** It feels really good. It's quite an accomplishment. It's the best achievement you can have in your poker career for tournaments. It's awesome.

**Question:** Can you talk about some of the challenges you faced during the tournament?

**Hanks:** Yeah. I had a pretty tough seat with Andrew Badecker to my left. I know he's an aggressive player. He three-bets a lot, so I had to be pretty selective with what I was opening, and I had to be selective with pots I was in and really make sure I was in for the right reasons. And Vanessa Selbst was the best player at the table. Fortunately, I had direct position on her, which helped out a great deal in terms of the dynamics and how everything unraveled.

**Question:** How does this live accomplishment compare to your online accomplishments?

**Hanks:** Online is certainly treated as real. Everything is very much happening. But live is a whole different world. It feels like once you can do this, you got it.

**Question:** Were you able to appreciate this a little more with your friends on the rail behind you?

**Hanks:** Very much so. And there were two family friends here -- my good friends Brian and Kristen just left. Very cool to see them. They're from back home in my neck of the woods. I had no idea they were in town, and I heard them screaming. They just got in town yesterday.

**Question:** You took the heads up lead pretty quick there and were pretty deep. So what was your strategy going into the final match against Jacob?

**Hanks:** Well, it started off very much so...we played such a long battle that everything just kinda' seemed, I guess standard is a good word for it when playing heads up. And as soon as that last level hit we kind of became a little bit more vulnerable to pre-bets...post flop...you can't call everything pre-bets too well. So, it just changed the dynamics of the heads up game a little bit. I widened my range a little bit. I'm pretty sure he did as well. He knew he was getting in good, fist pumped as soon as he saw my ace-eight. It was the very bottom for me to get it in. And I was kinda, I hate to say it, but I was a little frustrated. But I thought that I could be ahead in a few minutes and essentially coin flipped. That's what it came down to.

**Question:** I understand you got pretty low during Day Two and staged a comeback. Could you tell us a little more about that?

**Hanks:** I got about as low as you can get. I had not even enough in chips to cover the small blind. And I chopped the pot and won four pots in five consecutive games to get right back to 20 to 25 blinds. And shortly after that I doubled up again, and I was back in the tournament.

**Question:** Your heads-up opponent Jacob Bazeley has some similarities with you, yes?

**Hanks:** We're the same age and very similar. And since yesterday, even after I had my comeback at the next table change, I ended up with "Baze." We've spent dinner breaks together. Last night we got a piece of pizza together. There were still 60 people left. We even made comments like, 'We'll go up here, do our thing, have dinner, come down, then we'll see each other heads up.'

**Question:** How did you like the new stage and final table set up in the Pavilion (for the first time)?

**Hanks:** It's tight quarters. But I think it's awesome for the fans. People are just right there, able to see what's going on. And these guys, I don't know how they stood there that long. It's pretty neat to be able to just party here next to the table as long as the players don't mind. It's the same rail as Phil Collins' Main Event table last year.

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## THE FINAL TABLE

The final table contained three former WSOP gold bracelet winners – including J.P. Kelly (2 wins), Vanessa Selbst (1 win) and Andrew Badecker (1 win).

The final table was comprised of nine players, which included seven professionals. The two non-pros were Abdyl Konjuhi and Michael Kaufman.

Eight of the nine final table players were from the United States. The only non-American was J.P. Kelly, from the U.K.

Final table participants ranged in age from 24 (youngest) to 35 (oldest).

The runner up was Jacob Bazeley, from Ludlow, KY. The 29-year-old poker pro has now cashed 8 times at the WSOP in Las Vegas, and 9 times on the WSOP Circuit, earning well over \$600,000 in prize money. Bazeley's consolation prize amounted to \$322,294.

The third-place finisher was former gold bracelet winner Andrew Badecker, from Vernon, CT. He hit the half-million mark in career WSOP earnings with this showing. Badecker won his gold bracelet last year in the \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em Shootout.

The fourth-place finisher was Vanessa Selbst – who is originally from New York City and now living in Las Vegas. Selbst has emerged in recent years as arguably the world's top female tournament player. In fact, she was the last female to win a gold bracelet in an open event at the WSOP, which took place back in 2008. Selbst nearly bookended a record-void for women with duel wins, but ran into trouble at four-handed and went out without the jewelry. Selbst remains at one victory, but did manage to move into second place in all-time money won by females.

The fifth-place finisher was Abdyl Konjuhi, originally from Kosovo and now living in Anchorage, AK. This marked his first time to cash in a WSOP event.

The sixth-place finisher was Ryan Schmidt, from Portland, OR. This was his eighth WSOP cash.

The seventh-place finisher was Michael Kaufman, from Worcester, MA. He is a 25-year-old programmer. This was his fourth WSOP cash.

The eighth-place finisher was two-time WSOP gold bracelet winner J.P. Kelly, from the Aylesbury, UK. This was WSOP cash number 12 for Kelly, who crossed the \$1 million mark in earnings. Kelly's previous wins both came in 2009, one in Las Vegas and the other at WSOP Europe, in London.

The ninth-place finisher was Richard Park, from Seal Beach, CA. This was his second WSOP cash.

The final table began at 4:30 pm and lasted until 11:00 pm. Minus a one-hour dinner break, the duration was about 5.5 hours.

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## OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top 216 finishers collected prize money.

Tournament results are to be entered into all official records as an open event. Results are also to be included in the 2012 "WSOP Player of the Year" race.

Multiple former WSOP gold bracelet winners cashed in this event.

Perhaps the most noteworthy in-the-money finish was Phil Hellmuth's 61<sup>st</sup>-place showing. With his visit to the payout window in the first open event of the year, Hellmuth elevated his status one notch higher as the all-time WSOP cashes leader. This was number 86 for Hellmuth, who leads his closest threat, second-ranked Men "the Master" Nguyen (at 72 cashes).

Paul Wasicka took 20<sup>th</sup> place. He now has \$6.2 million in career WSOP earnings – but still no gold bracelet.

Five-time gold bracelet winner John Juanda took 25<sup>th</sup> place.

Two-time gold bracelet winner Hoyt Corkins cashed in 72<sup>nd</sup> place.

Five-time gold bracelet winner Layne Flack took 118<sup>th</sup> place.

Two-time gold bracelet winner Peter Vilandos ended as the 127<sup>th</sup>-place finisher.

Two-time gold bracelet winner Jason Mercier took 181<sup>st</sup> place.

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## ODDS AND ENDS

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #2, since it's the second gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Memorial Day, and concluding late Wednesday.

The tournament attracted 2,101 entries.

There were 76 female entrants, which represented 3.6 percent of the field.

The average age of all entrants was 37.2 years. Note that this figure is two full years *higher* than similar events played last year. If this pattern holds, it may indicate a slight aging of the WSOP population, in addition to trends away from a concentration of younger online poker players.

The average age of players that cashed was 36.2 years – just slightly below the average age of entrants.

The average age of players that made it to the final table was just 28 years – an indication that younger players continue to outperform older players.

There were 42 different nations represented by players in the field. There were 17 nations represented by players that cashed.

Just prior to the start of the Rio's first event, WSOP Tournament Director Jack Effel took the main stage. Prior to the Memorial Day start, veterans in the tournament were recognized. The "Star-Spangled Banner" was also played to commemorate the national holiday.

Performing the official "Shuffle Up and Deal" honors was poker player "Captain" Tom Franklin, a two-time WSOP gold bracelet winner and former United States Marine Corps and Vietnam War veteran. He acknowledged veterans at this year's WSOP, by asking them to stand and be recognized. The crowd gave the vets a nice ovation.

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The first final table to be played in the Pavilion proved to be thrilling for both players and spectators. In previous years, all WSOP gold bracelet events (in Las Vegas) have concluded inside the Amazon Room. In fact, this was the first gold bracelet won outside the Amazon Room since Joe Hachem's victory in the 2005 Main Event, held at the old Binion's Horseshoe – aside from events held annually at WSOP Europe.

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 Brasilia. 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.

Hanks gold bracelet ceremony is set to take place on Thursday, May 31<sup>st</sup>. At his request, the U.S. National Anthem will be played in honor of his victory.

## EVENT HISTORY

There have been more \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournaments than any other event in WSOP history.

## TOURNAMENT PLAY

The tournament officially began on Monday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, at noon. The tournament officially ended on May 30<sup>th</sup>, at 11 pm.

## 2012 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of Event #2, the 2012 WSOP has attracted 2,833 entries. \$3,165,750 in prize money has been awarded to in-the-money finishers, so far.

This year, there are 61 gold bracelet events being held in Las Vegas. This is an increase of three events over last year's number -- 58.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:  
United States (2): Chip Saechao, Brent Hanks

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:  
United States (1): Brent Hanks  
Thailand (1): Chip Saechao

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of winners has been:  
California (1): Chip Saechao  
Nevada (1): Brent Hanks

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): Brent Hanks

Semi-Pros (0):

Amateurs (1): Chip Saechao

The streak of consecutive male gold bracelet winners is currently at 221 consecutive events, and counting. Aside from the annual Ladies Poker Championship, the last female to win an open WSOP event was Vanessa Selbst, in 2008. The longest cold streak for female players is now matched at 221 consecutive open events, which also took place between 1982 and 1996.

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

*-- 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: [WSOP.com](http://WSOP.com). Thank you.*

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For official news and the latest updates from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: [WSOP.com](http://WSOP.com)

For statistics and historical information from the 2012 World Series of Poker, contact Nolan Dalla at: [nolandalla@aol.com](mailto:nolandalla@aol.com) or [nolandalla@gmail.com](mailto:nolandalla@gmail.com)

For official media photographs from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: [www.pokernews.photoshelter.com](http://www.pokernews.photoshelter.com)

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