



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

**Official Report  
Event #3**

**Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em / Pot-Limit Omaha Mix**

**Buy-In: \$3,000**

**Number of Entries: 317**

**Total Net Prize Pool: \$865,410**

**Number of Places Paid: 64**

**First Place Prize: \$207,708**

**May 29-31, 2012**

## **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES**

May the Force Be With Leif

"Jungle Boy" Wins New WSOP Event -- Heads-Up Mix: No-Limit Hold'em/Pot-Limit Omaha

Debut \$5,000 Buy-In Tournament Draws 317 Entrants

Two Former Gold Bracelet Winners Make Final Eight – Andy Frankenberger and Annette Obrestad

Mike Sexton Accomplishes a WSOP First – Duel Cashes in Simultaneous Events

Three Gold Bracelets Won – 58 More at Stake!

## **TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW**

One thing's for certain. The World Series of Poker is *never* dull. There's always something happening at the Rio – making that *several things* happening – no matter what the day or schedule of events.

The WSOP also is willing to take some risks and offer unique attractions that are not even on the map of poker consciousness elsewhere. Consider the *third* gold bracelet event offered on this year's schedule – a first-time-ever poker tournament called "Heads-Up No-Limit Hold'em / Pot Limit Omaha." The concept calls for competitors to play alternating 20-minute rounds of No-Limit Hold'em and Pot-Limit Omaha – in the pressure cooker of a heads-up format.

Sure. Heads-up events have been held in the past. There's also been plenty of No-Limit and Pot-Limit action. But never before in history has this rich gumbo of popular poker ingredients all been tossed into a collective pot and served to a medley of ravenous poker aficionados.

The "dinner" cost \$3,000 to attend (the entry fee), which didn't exactly dissuade 317 guests from sitting down at the table in order to dine at what amounted to the grand opening of a nine course meal. That's right, nine "courses" as in heads-up matches necessary for the ultimate winner, in what amounted to a gauntlet of increasing difficulty.

Culinary showman Emeril Lagasse would never have stood a chance.

As things turned out, the guy with the coolest name in poker -- *Leif Force* -- ended up as the head chef of the affair, collecting an indubitably appetizing \$207,708 in prize money as his main course, plus a sparkling new WSOP gold bracelet for dessert.

The enigmatic-looking poker pro, nicknamed "Jungle Boy" for his unorthodox appearances at WSOPs past, seems to have gradually melded into semi-conformity as his WSOP earnings have continued to uptick in recent years. Force, from Tallahassee, Florida is best known to many for his 11th-place finish in the 2006 Main Event Championship, when he won a staggering \$1,154,527 in his first-ever appearance at the WSOP. Since then, Leif has posted some nice results, but nothing close to winning what amounted to his most prestigious title ever.

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #3, since it's the third gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Tuesday at noon, and concluding Thursday evening at a relatively early hour, so far as final tables go. Leif had his money and gold bracelet by 8:00 pm, just as most other shows in Las Vegas were just getting underway. Instead, Leif found himself taking a bow and a curtain call of his own.

The tournament began with 317 players – a nice turnout considering the debut nature of the event plus the \$5,000 buy-in. After the first day, only 64 players survived. The second day included the field being further reduced to the last 8 players. Once the final heads-up match was reached on Thursday, players were moved to the ESPN Main Stage, where Force defeated Jason Koon in a span of about 90 minutes.

For his runner-up finish, Koon – a local Las Vegas player -- collected \$128,660.

The Event #3 prize pool totaled \$870,870. The top 64 finishers were paid.

Among those who cashed in the round of eight were two former WSOP gold bracelet winners -- Andy Frankenberger and Annette Obrestad.

The next group of in-the-money finishers (round of 16) included three more former title holders – Josh Arieh, David Williams, and Mike Sexton.

In fact, Sexton, an inductee into the Poker Hall of Fame two years ago, entered two events which began the same day. Even though the Heads-Up format of Event #3 (which included mandatory down time) allowed Sexton more time to concentrate on the Eight-or-Better competition, he nonetheless entered the record books, of sorts. Sexton accomplished what is believed to be a first in poker history. He entered both tournaments, and not only cashed in both but also managed to finish in the top 16 for both tournaments. Indeed, two min-cashes would be quite impressive. But to think that Sexton ran deep in two overlapping events is phenomenal.

But in the end, Sexton was just one of 316 casualties, whose hopes of WSOP bracelet glory will have to wait... at least until the next event.

Force hereby becomes the third player to win a gold bracelet at this year's WSOP.

## **MEET NEW WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION – LEIF FORCE**

Name: Leif Force

Nickname: "Jungle Boy"

Birthplace: Florida (USA)

Current Residence: Tallahassee, Florida (USA)

Age: 29

Marital Status: Single (with girlfriend)

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Length of Time as a Full-Time Pro: 6 years

Number of WSOP Cashes: 9 (plus 2 WSOP Circuit cashes)

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 2

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

Best Previous WSOP finish: 6<sup>th</sup> in \$5,000 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha High-Low Split in 2011

Total WSOP Earnings: \$1,538,937

Other Interesting Facts: Free-spirited, serious game theorist, non-materialistic

Bet You Didn't Know: For the most part, over the years Force has shared half of his tournament winnings with his parents.

## QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"My parents, they wanted to name me "LIFE," but they thought it would be hard on me growing up with a name like that. So, instead they named me "LEIF," which obviously isn't much better. By the time I was like 12, basically everyone was making fun of me. You know, kids, when they're young, they suck. They're just like boys. Whatever. But after that, it paid off. It was actually a cool name, and girls started liking it. In the end, it's definitely worked out for the best."*

-- Leif Force

## WINNER QUOTES (POST-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW)

**On his first WSOP deep run, which took place in the 2006 Main Event:** I was really short-stacked that entire tournament. And then I started building up chips with a couple tables left. I got to sixth in chips with 12 or 13 left. And then, I literally caught my worst run of cards that I'll probably ever have my entire life. I had ace-jack and (a pair of) sevens in like the last seven hours of play, and those were by far the best hands I had in seven-hours six-handed. So, I just got chipped down. Got down to a few blinds. Then, got into the draw and lost. Unfortunately, I didn't get the cards at the right time.

**On thoughts back in 2006 that winning a WSOP gold bracelet would come soon thereafter:** I didn't think it was gonna be that long. I final-tabled an event a couple years ago – an Omaha event in 2008, which I think is my best game. I ran really unlucky at the final table. I thought that was gonna be by far my best chance to win. And this tournament, this was just for fun. I love playing Omaha, and I figured with the 20-minute blinds, I was like, 'Let's see what happens.' I mean, we can gamble a lot and hope it works out.

**On the Heads-Up Mixed Games being offered for the first time:** I actually wasn't going to play it because like most of the heads-up tournaments, I thought it was gonna' be you play a full round of Hold'em and then maybe switch to Omaha. I didn't really check the structure sheets. Then I looked, and I found out it was 20 minutes, switching back-and-forth, and I booked my ticket right then because, you know, I'm not a Hold'em specialist. So, I wasn't gonna' play if it was a full round of Hold'em. But I loved the tournament. It was turbo for the most part, which is great because that's how I think Omaha should be. You know, a little gamble here and there. Besides that, I think it was pretty good structure.

**On his preference for Pot-Limit Omaha versus Hold'em:** I play Omaha because I hate folding. I love to play hands. It's such an enjoyable game. Even the players who play Omaha are funner—I know that's not a word—more fun in general. Like the guy I was playing in the quarter finals was so serious; he's a straight Hold'em player, doesn't play PLO. I get to the next round against my buddy, Julian, and he's an Omaha player, and we just like kidding around. And we just decided, 'cause I love to gamble—What can we do to spice things up a little bit? I was like, might as well show one card. I figured he'd go along with it, so I just went for it.

**On having an unusual name (Leif Force):** My parents, they wanted to name me "LIFE," but they thought it would be hard on me growing up with a name like that. So, instead they named me "LEIF," which obviously isn't much better. By the time I was like 12, basically everyone was making fun of me. You know, kids, when they're young, they suck. They're just like boys. Whatever. But after that, it paid off. It was actually a cool name, and girls started liking it. In the end, it's definitely worked out for the best.

**On cutting his dreadlocks (hair) a few years ago, which was one of his trademarks:** A lot of my friends that are guys are like, 'Hey, you look great now. You really cleaned up.' And I'm like, 'I'm just lazy.' I didn't even like all the hair and, you know, the facial hair. So, it wasn't a big deal at all to change it.

**On having his girlfriend present to witness his WSOP victory:** Her name is Andrea Salon....We've been together since New Year's Eve. Very cool night....She is very shy....never been to Vegas. Never been on a plane before a couple days ago. It was nice. She came for the semifinals. It was the first time she watched me play poker.

**On what winning a WSOP gold bracelet means:** Can I be honest? It really doesn't mean that much. I'm not in it for just purely the money either. I've never considered myself just to play just to make money, like grind it out, as they would say. I used to play with my entire bank roll. Just like in the World Series in 2006, I put all of my \$10,000 on the line. I

used to play with every cent I had online. Just like, win or lose, see what happens. I play to win. I'm uber-competitive. Whatever I play, I just want to win. All the other things don't really matter that much.

**On the self-satisfaction of making good decisions and being highly-competitive:** Yeah. Just play my best, really not make mistakes and enjoy it. I love poker because you play against so many different people from all over the world with all their different strategies, all their different thoughts on it. Like, you get to play the average Joe, the billionaire, you know, the people from Russia, Ireland, everywhere. And that's what I love about it...just watching people.

**On how he's fared financially since winning \$1.1 million six years earlier:** Luckily, I gave a lot to my parents. And then I had to, you know, buy some stuff. And I did, I gambled a good amount of it, but luckily, I did some good things with it. Bought some stuff, gave it to my parents. The one thing is, I'll never be able to really build a huge bank roll because pretty much whenever I win a lot, I give about half to my parents, so luckily if I continue to win, which has been the case so far, I'm doing alright.

**On what he would you be doing if he could not play poker for a living:** If it wasn't for poker, I'd like to become a coach or maybe be a scout. I love just watching people. I love the way they do things and trying to figure out the little technicalities, the way they do things.

## THE FINAL TABLE

The final table was technically comprised of only the top two finishers – Leif Force and Jason Koon. Neither player has won previously, so a first-time champion was guaranteed.

Both final table players were from the United States. The only non-American to appear at any WSOP final table this year (through three events) is J.P. Kelly, from the U.K.

Final table participants ranged in age from 24 (youngest) to 29 (oldest).

The runner up was Jason Koon, from Las Vegas, NV. He is a 27-year-old sales executive and semi-pro player originally from Pittsburgh, PA. Koon's consolation prize amounted to \$128,660.

The players finishing in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> place were technically ranked in the bust order, but tied for the same prize money. The same applies to finishers in the earlier rounds, as well.

Former WSOP gold bracelet winner Andy Frankenberger (officially listed as 6<sup>th</sup>) made the round of the top 8 players.

Former WSOP gold bracelet winner Annette Obrestad (officially listed as 8<sup>th</sup>) made the round of the top 8 players.

The final table began at 7:00 pm and lasted until 8:30 pm. The duration was about 90 minutes. Because only two players made it to the final table in the heads-up format, this quite possibly ranks as the speediest final table in WSOP history (although comparisons to conventional final tables make this somewhat irrelevant).

## OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top 64 finishers collected prize money. This means all players who played in Day Two forward.

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 Mike Sexton's deep run. He accomplished what is believed to be a first in poker history. He entered both tournaments, and not only cashed in both but also managed to finish in the top 16 for both tournaments. Indeed, two min-cashes would be quite impressive.

Two-time winner Josh Arieh made the final 16.

David Williams made the final 16.

Mike Sexton made the final 16.

Matt Jarvis made the final 32.

Two-time winner Jose-Luis Velador made the final 64.

Ayaz Mahmood made the final 64.

Phillipe Boucher made the final 64.

Four-time winner David Chiu made the final 64.

Sam Stein made the final 64.

Two-time winner Eric Froehlich, a.k.a. "E-Fro" made the final 64.

This was a first-time event at the WSOP. Hence, there was no defending champion.

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #3, since it's the third gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Tuesday at noon and concluding Thursday evening.

The tournament attracted 317 entries.

There were only 2 female entrants, which represented less than 1 percent of the field. Note: This was the lowest turnout for females for any event over the past several years.

The average age of all entrants was 30 years – which skews about five years lower than the average WSOP participant, so far.

The average age of players that cashed was 29.6 years – just slightly below the average age of entrants.

There were 20 different nations represented by players in the field. There were 10 nations represented by players that cashed.

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 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.

## **EVENT HISTORY**

This was the first gold bracelet event in WSOP history with a heads-up format and multiple games. The only previous heads-up tournaments were exclusively No-Limit Hold'em events.

## **TOURNAMENT PLAY**

The tournament officially began on Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, at noon. The tournament officially ended on May 31<sup>st</sup>, at 8:30 pm.

## **2012 WSOP STATISTICS**

Through the conclusion of Event #3, the 2012 WSOP has attracted 3,150 entries. \$4,036,620 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 two events over last year's number -- 59.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:  
United States (3): Chip Saechao, Brent Hanks, Leif Force

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:  
United States (2): Brent Hanks, Leif Force  
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

Florida (1): Leif Force

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 (2): Brent Hanks, Leif Force

Semi-Pros (0):

Amateurs (1): Chip Saechao

The streak of consecutive male gold bracelet winners is currently at 222 consecutive events, and counting. Aside from the annual Ladies Poker Championship (a non-open event), the last female to win an open WSOP event was Vanessa Selbst, back in 2008. The longest cold streak for female players had previously been 221 consecutive open events, which 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.*

---

*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)*

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

*For official spectator photographs from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: [www.imagemasterspoker.com](http://www.imagemasterspoker.com)*

*For specific media photo requests, email [dcurlley@hillmanpr.com](mailto:dcurlley@hillmanpr.com) and list "Urgent Media Request" as the subject line.*

*Note: All photos must be credited as follows: Photographer's Name/WSOP*

*The 2012 World Series of Poker's title sponsor is Jack Link's Beef Jerky. For more information, visit: [www.jacklinks.com](http://www.jacklinks.com)*