



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

**Official Report
Event #6
No-Limit Hold'em Mixed Max
Buy-In: \$5,000
Number of Entries: 409
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,922,300
Number of Places Paid: 44
First Place Prize: \$480,564
May 31 - June 3, 2012**

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

Marathon Man: Aubin Cazals Collects Gold Bracelet and \$480,564

First-Timer at WSOP Wins Stunning Victory

Mixed-Max Debut at WSOP Goes Five Grueling, Record-Setting Days

First-Time WSOP Event Has a Memorable Debut

Joseph Cheong Finishes Second in Final Heads-Up Duel

Following Seven Straight American Winners, France Joins the WSOP Winners' Party

Eight Gold Bracelets Won – 53 More at Stake!

TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

Tonight, a virtual poker unknown named Aubin Cazals won a new tournament that was introduced at the WSOP in Las Vegas for the first time – the \$5,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em Mixed Max.

Cazals, a 21-year-old online poker pro currently residing on the island-nation of Malta, collected the handsome sum of \$480,564 in prize money. He was also presented with his first-ever WSOP gold bracelet – symbolizing poker's highest achievement. However, this tournament is more likely to be remembered for its historic ramifications and even some controversy that impacted play on what was expected to be the final day.

It all started 8,000 miles away. "Mixed Max" made its Las Vegas debut, following a highly-successful inaugural showing at the 2011 WSOP Europe held last October in (Cannes) France -- ironically the birthplace of the winner. Also known as "No-Limit Hold'em (Split-Format)", the tournament requires participants to play three distinct configurations of no-limit spread over (what was to be) four consecutive days and nights.

First day matches were played nine-handed. Second day matches were played six-handed. Third and fourth day matches – and alas, what bled into an unscheduled *fifth day* -- were played heads-up. The final 32 players were seeded according to brackets and ultimately played down to a winner.

The inaugural gold bracelet event attracted a higher than expected turnout. The tourney drew 409 entrants, more than *three times* the number who participated in the similar version spread last year at WSOP Europe. However, just when things were sailing along smoothly, an unforeseen series of developments sidetracked what was to be the fourth and final day.

It began on Sunday afternoon when Aubin Cazals sat down to face Warwick Mirzikinian in the heads-up semifinal. Across the room, the other semifinal match – between Joseph Cheong and Hugo Lemaire -- played out in the relatively brisk time of a couple of hours. Meanwhile, Cazals had absolutely no idea he was entering the first stage of what would turn out to be a record-breaking test of endurance.

One hour passed. Then, two....three.....four. By sundown -- seven hours into the duel -- players and spectators began inquiring about the longest heads-up match in tournament poker history. The answer was -- *7 hours and 6 minutes*. That's the precise amount of time it took David "Chip" Reese to defeat Andy Bloch in the final stage of the \$50,000 buy-in Poker Player Championship, held six years ago.

By 10 p.m., everyone inside the tournament arena -- and a worldwide audience following the action online -- knew they were witnessing something that had never happened before. As things turned out, the old record of seven hours was a mere sprint compared to the brain-mashing 9-hour and 25-minute marathon death match that took place in the Amazon Room at the Rio in Las Vegas on Sunday. By the time Cazals finally extinguished the fire that was Mirzikinian's spirit -- absolutely refusing to surrender his chips no matter what the disadvantage -- players, spectators, and even staff, were camped around the final table like a late-night marshmallow roast.

In the end, Mirzikinian ended up as the toasted marshmallow. All those grueling decisions, all that thinking and re-thinking, all that careful planning and contemplation wiped out in a futile session that would have had the exact same financial consequences had he busted out on the first hand, instead of the 300th -- some nine hours earlier. Poor Mirzikinian could have had lunch, watched a movie, had a five-course dinner, and then seen a Vegas show for the amount of time he invested in what turned out to be wasted, albeit gallant, effort.

Worse, Mirzikinian won't actually get any "official" credit for being fodder on the sacrificial altar of poker history. Since the semifinal was not actually the "heads-up" stage of the tournament (which means between the last two players competing for a gold bracelet), the quasi-record setting match will carry an *asterisk*. In reality, the semifinal was most certainly the longest heads-up match of any poker tournament in history. Never have two competitors sat face to face for so long at a tournament table.

But the story wasn't quite finished yet. Due to the literal "midnight hour," the two *actual* finalists -- Cazals and Cheong -- found themselves face to face with tournament staff, contemplating options. The natural decision was to go ahead and play out the match, no matter how late it went. Trouble was, Cheong had been sidelined for so long in a waiting game, never anticipating the other match would drag out more than nine hours. He therefore played in another tournament and had accumulated a healthy stack of chips, leaving him with the quandary of potentially playing an all-nighter and then bunny-hopping into the second day of the other gold bracelet tournament, no matter what the hour or how severe his fatigue.

Things were a mess. The cliff notes of the late-night discussion were that everyone eventually agreed to return for what would be an unscheduled fifth day, which began on ESPN's main stage on Monday at noon.

Like two gunfighters walking into the Rio corral at high noon, Cheong and Cazals returned for the ultimate showdown, which was anticipated to retest the endurance of both players and especially Cazals -- not to mention the few in attendance who could stomach watching what amounted to the proverbial equivalent of poker's drying paint.

All one had to do to know they were in for another killer was to consider the starting blinds/antes in relation to the chip stacks. The level called for play to start at 4,000-8,000 with a 1,000 ante. So, the cost to play a round was 14,000. Sounds high, until one considers the stacks of the two players -- about 3,000,000 each. That's right -- *three million*. Indeed, never before in any tournament in history had the average stack represents *375 big blinds*. Moreover, anyone who suggests the WSOP shortchanges players with structures might want to look close at this one, for fear of turning into a laughingstock.

As things turned out, the de-factor heads-up match went "only" five hours -- a walk in the park -- and ended when Cazals made trip kings versus Cheong's pocket fours on the final hand. Cheong later admitted he misread a false tell on his opponent, never guessing that Cazals was so strong with the kings in a pre-flop re-raising war. Cheong's consolation prize amounted to a less-than-satisfying payout. The reported figure Cheong "won" was \$296,956 for second place. But in the runner up's mind, he "lost" about nearly two-hundred grand -- the difference in prize money between 1st and 2nd.

So, while Cazals goes down in the history books as the sixth winner of a gold bracelet at this year's WSOP, the final outcome could be somewhat of a sidebar to the reality that nothing at the WSOP ever goes quite as predicted. A first-

time gold bracelet event, a record-setting heads-up match, and even some controversy about how the tournament was managed shall ultimately be the remembrances associated with what was a memorable five-day marathon.

MEET NEW WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION – AUBIN CAZALS

Name: Aubin Cazals

Birthplace: Valllesvilles (France)

Birthdate: December 1990

Childhood: France

Current Residence: Sliema (Malta)

Age at Time of Victory: 21 years (and six months)

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Education: Attended ESSEC, Grande Ecole de Commerce (business school in Paris)

Profession: Professional Poker Player (primarily online)

Number of WSOP Cashes: 1

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 1

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

Best Previous WSOP finish: None

Total WSOP Career Earnings: \$480,564

WINNER QUOTES (POST-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW)

Question: *Can you tell us about where you live?*

Cazals: I was born in France. I moved to Malta a month ago to be able to play poker online.

Question: *What did you do before you played poker?*

Cazals: I was a student at ESSEC business school in Paris.

Question: *Will you go back to business or will it be all poker from here on out?*

Cazals: It's going to be poker for years to come. I don't really want to play poker for more than 10 years. But at the moment, it is going to be poker.

Question: *You are 21-years-old. Do your parents approve of your decision to play poker?*

Cazals: They were not happy at the beginning when I told them I was going to play poker. My mother didn't mind; she was okay with the idea. But they knew I was doing well and I loved the game. If they see I'm happy, then they are happy.

Question: *What will they say when you show them this money and a gold bracelet?*

Cazals: They are going to be very happy for me.

Question: *What was it like to go through the nine-hour, grueling heads-up match on Sunday?*

Cazals: At the beginning I had a good feeling because I won a couple of pots. Then I started running bad and missing flops. It was a very tough match, knowing when to pick the aggressiveness pre- and post-flop. At the end, I was very tired, but he was, too. His tiredness caused some mistakes in the end. I think my youth and endurance prevailed in the end. I used to run long distance races and that helped me well with my endurance at the table.

Question: *It seemed that you and Joseph Cheong developed a certain camaraderie during the heads-up match today.*

Cazals: We talked yesterday about playing either last night, or today. We wanted to play tomorrow, but we were not able to. We were laughing and joking about the match last night and now we have played for five hours together and are friends.

Question: *What were your thoughts on the final match and playing against Cheong?*

Cazals: He did very well. He was a very tough opponent. I think he made a mistake on the last hand. I wasn't playing very aggressive. I think it was a mistake but, before that hand, he was playing very well.

THE FINAL TABLE

The final table was comprised of the top two finishers (the finale was a heads-up match between Joseph Cheong and Aubin Cazals).

No former gold bracelet winners were present at the final table of two players.

Final table players came from two nations – the United States (1 player) and France (1 player).

Final table participants ranged in age from 21 to 25.

The runner up was Joseph Cheong, from La Mirada, CA. He is best known for his third-place finish in the 2010 WSOP Main Event – worth \$4.1 million. This time, Cheong added \$296,956 to his WSOP career earnings. The Korean-born poker pro now has eight WSOP cashes, and four WSOP Circuit cashes, along with a gold ring won at Harrah's Rincon in 2010.

Final table play began at noon and lasted until 5:15 p.m. The duration was about five hours, fifteen minutes.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top 44 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.

Six former WSOP gold bracelet winners cashed in this event. They were Brock Parker (14th), John "World" Hennigan (20th), Brian Rast (24th), Konstantin Puchkov (26th), Eric Froehlich (28th), and Gavin Smith (38th).

This was career cash number 38 for Tom McCormick, a.k.a. "The Shamrock Kid," who currently ranks second all-time on the list of "Most Cashes without Winning a Gold Bracelet."

This was a first-time event at the WSOP (Las Vegas) – hence, there was no defending champion. However, this tournament was played at the 2011 WSOP Europe. The winner was Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi, who collected his second gold bracelet in that event.

Ironically, the debut of this event in France was won by an American. The debut of this event in the United States was won by a Frenchman.

None of the 16 players who cashed in the 2011 WSOP Europe version of this tournament cashed in this tournament.

ODDS AND ENDS

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #6, since it's the sixth gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over five consecutive days and nights, starting on Thursday at noon and concluding Monday afternoon at 5:15 p.m.

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. Members of the public and media are permitted to shoot photos and video of the ceremony.

2012 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of Event #8, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (7): Chip Saechao, Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott
France (1): Aubin Cazals

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

United States (5): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott
Thailand (1): Chip Saechao
Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov
France (1): Aubin Cazals

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of (American) winners has been:

Nevada (2): Brent Hanks, Andy Bloch
Florida (2): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman
California (1): Chip Saechao
Illinois (1): Nick Jivkov
Alabama (1): Herbert Tapscott

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 (4): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Andy Bloch, Aubin Cazals
Semi-Pros (2): Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov
Amateurs (2): Chip Saechao, Herbert Tapscott

The streak of consecutive male gold bracelet winners is currently at 227 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. Thank you.

For official news and the latest updates from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: WSOP.com

For statistics and historical information from the 2012 World Series of Poker, contact Nolan Dalla at: nolandalla@aol.com

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