



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

**Official Report
Event #14
Limit Hold'em Shootout
Buy-In: \$1,500
Number of Entries: 1,138
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,536,300
Number of Places Paid: 120
First Place Prize: \$311,174
June 6-8, 2012**

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

Brandon Schaefer: We Salute You!

Former Professional Poker Player Gives Up the Game to Serve His Country

In Final Swan Song before U.S. Army Enlistment, Seattle Man Collects WSOP Gold Bracelet and \$311,174

Five-Time Title Holder Layne Flacks Takes Fourth / Two-Time Champ Jeff Madsen Gets Seventh

Fourteen Gold Bracelets Won – 47 More at Stake!

TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

This is a remarkable story.

It's a story about personal sacrifice. It is a story about making a commitment, and then keeping it. It is a story about the escalating maturity of a remarkable young man who initially aspired to do one thing in life, and then suddenly did an extraordinary "about-face," ultimately choosing to march to a completely different drummer, headed in an entirely different direction.

Meet – *Brandon Schaefer*.

Schaefer is a 31-year-old man originally from Evanston, IL, who once aspired to play poker for a living. Like so many of his peers, he got caught up in the so-called "poker craze" during the post-Moneymaker era and soon found himself playing poker more than anything else. Before he knew it, poker was more than just a hobby. It was paying the bills. Gradually, Schaefer transformed from full-time student into the kind of person seen by the thousands littering the tournament rooms and hallways of places like the World Series of Poker – a twenty-something, oft-hooded android incessantly hooked up to an iPod, mouse-clicking his way to financial independence. No question, the "job" had it perks.

But something in Schaefer's life was seriously missing. Poker was not an *end*. It was a *means*. It was a *means to an end*. Indeed, poker was a means to do something else. To do something bigger. To do something greater. To see more of the world's many magical places. To experience more things. To enjoy life more. Much more.

Stoked with a bankroll enhanced by a combination of online success and some six-figure tournament cashes in Europe, Schaefer took some time off to travel and see the world. He visited new places. The more he immersed himself in his

new experiences, the more he began to realize just how confining his previous ambition and occupation had become. Spending 70 hours a week gazing at a computer screen or sitting inside poker rooms avoiding the pratfall of looming bad beats simply wasn't fulfilling. Make that fulfilling *enough*.

Fulfilling for some? Perhaps. Fulfilling for many? Perhaps. Just look around. But not fulfilling enough for Schaefer.

During his many travels, Schaefer increasingly found himself drawn to the prospect of flying and the idea of becoming an aviator. He also felt a deep sense of patriotism and a duty to give something back to his community and to country. Encouraged by his older brother, who is currently an active-duty career military officer, Schaefer made a decision that was as daring as it is extraordinary.

Schaefer decided to *walk away* from poker. *Quit* the game. *Give it up*. Schaefer was about to make the ultimate gamble, and his decision had nothing to do with cards and chips. He was giving up what for him had become a *sure thing*, in exchange for much greater uncertainty, laced with the prospect of danger.

And so, last September, Schaefer – now residing in Seattle, WA – walked into his local Army recruiting office and explained that he wanted to enlist in the United States Army. He further explained that his ambition was to fly.

Schaefer was accepted on the spot and soon went through basic training. He served for eight months in the military. Then, he was accepted into a special program for aspiring helicopter pilots. Schaefer is scheduled to begin his flight training in a few weeks.

But just prior to making what many would consider to be a giant leap of faith -- and possibly be shipped overseas for a far more dangerous role -- Schaefer decided to give poker one last try. He made what will be a final trip (for a long time) to Las Vegas and to the 2012 World Series of Poker. Schaefer later confided that he had totally forgotten about the WSOP this year, but once he heard the tournaments were now taking place, he boarded a plane at the last moment with the intent to enter just one event – which was the *\$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em Shootout*.

When Schaefer arrived at the Rio and walked the halls with people who had previously been his poker playing peers, most of his compatriots probably had no idea of the commitment, the risks, and potentially the dangers that lie ahead for the player who initially took a place at Table 422, Seat 6 on Day One. To bystanders, he looked like a typical poker player. His hair may have been a little shorter. He was in better physical shape than most. But no one would have guessed that beneath the ball cap and the jersey, he's one of our nation's very finest, the embodiment of selfless patriotism, and the personification of what General Douglas MacArthur alluded to when he famously uttered the words, "*Duty, Honor, Country.*"

On Day One, Schaefer won his first match, which meant he was in-the-money. Schaefer returned for Day Two, and won again, which meant he had locked up a seat in the final 12. Then, on a magical day where all the stars aligned in a perfect poker universe, Schaefer came to dominate final table action and won his WSOP gold bracelet on a Friday night that turned into one of the most talked-about and *Twittered* finales of this year's series.

He collected \$311,174 in prize money for the feat. But the money and the golden amulet of accomplishment didn't seem to be on Schaefer's mind much as he stood before the flashing cameras and the poker world for one last shining moment, before entering an alternative universe where the currency of survival has absolutely nothing to do with money or gold bracelets.

Ironically, Schaefer won poker's "Holy Grail" -- as he so aptly called it afterwards -- at the conclusion of one phase of his life and the very beginning of another. All those seven years of table decisions, all those mouse-clicks, all those days, weeks, months, and ultimately years trying to be the very best he could be at this game – finally authenticated by victory.

And yet, for all the intrinsic accolades that go along with winning a gold bracelet, for Brandon Schaefer, it's not over. It's just starting. A much bigger game is about to begin.

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Brandon Schaefer, a 31-year-old former professional poker player from Seattle, WA, won his first WSOP gold bracelet tonight, at the Rio in Las Vegas. He won the \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em Shootout title -- officially listed as Event #14 -- collecting \$311,174 in prize money.

Schaefer topped a strong mix of amateurs, semi-pros, and pros totaling 1,138 entrants, ultimately winning poker's most coveted prize on the third and final day of competition. Oddly enough, this was the first and only tournament Schaefer planned to play at this year's WSOP, although those plans could change now that he's essentially on a giant freeroll for the next few weeks, before next going off to a much more challenging mission ahead.

On June 15th, Schaefer is scheduled to report to a U.S. Army base in Alabama, where he will immediately begin training

as a helicopter pilot. He enlisted in the military nine months ago, following a seven-year stint as a professional poker player. Schaefer now has a six-year commitment to the U.S. Army and yearns to serve his country proudly as well as see the world as an aviator.

The runner up was Jon Cohen, a 24-year-old poke pro from Denver, CO who also enjoyed his best run ever in a WSOP tournament. He collected second place prize money amounting to \$192,559.

This was a very different kind of poker tournament requiring a very different set of skills and strategies. It was the first of two No-Limit Hold'em Shootouts on this year's WSOP schedule. Shootouts emphasize short-handed poker skills. This generally requires competitors to play cards out of the standard range of starting-hand requirements. It also makes post-flop skill paramount to victory. In a sense, each round is a "final table" for all the competitors since the objective is to accumulate chips and eliminate opponents.

A shootout tournament means players advance based on winning a series of table matches. The shootout format is single elimination. The number of matches depends on the number of tournament entries. In this event, the winner was required to win each in a series of consecutive matches. The first match was played on Wednesday. The second match, made up of all the first round winners, was played on Thursday. The last day included two tables of 12 players, who then played down to 10 players, and then ultimately down to the winner.

MEET NEW WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION – BRANDON SCHAEFER

Name: Brandon Schaefer

Birthplace: Evanston, IL (USA)

Age: 31

Childhood: Illinois

Current Residence: Seattle, WA (USA)

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Profession: Enlisted in U.S. Army (Warrant Officer) / Training to Become Helicopter Pilot

Previous Occupation: Former Professional Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 6

Number of WSOP final-table appearances: 1

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

Best Previous WSOP finish: 11th

First-Place Prize Money: \$311,174

Total WSOP Earnings: \$352,327

Note: Schaefer will be classified as a professional poker player in WSOP records, since he did play full-time exclusively for seven years as a working pro.

WINNER QUOTES (POST-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW)

QUESTION: Tell us about recently joining the Army.

SCHAEFER: I enlisted last September. First, I went to basic training and then officer school and survivor training. I joined in September in order to be a helicopter pilot and finally now, starting on June 15th, I am going to start my flight school. I have done all the military prerequisites. I'm flying back on Sunday to Alabama to start.

QUESTION: What motivated you give up playing poker full-time to enlist and do something so completely different?

SCHAEFER: I would say that for three years I was absolutely obsessed with poker. I played as much as I could online. But it was not fulfilling. I wanted something more. I don't know -- sitting around clicking a mouse doesn't do much for me. I explored around and looked at different avenues. First, I thought about opening a bar in Seattle. Then, I thought about opening a poker player travel agency. Every step I took down those roads seemed like a path that I did not want to take. It was way more involved than I thought it would be. So, I started talking to my brother. My brother is a pilot. He has been in the Army for eight years. He's a captain. 'Man, you know flying is the greatest thing in the world,' he told me. Every friend I meet of his is obsessed with aviation. It is not just the job satisfaction. I actually thought that might be fun to look at and try. I went to a recruiter and found out it was an eight-month process of applying. Well, I was accepted and now I am property of the U.S. Army for the next six years.

QUESTION: These are dangerous times we live in. You could be sent to some very dangerous areas of the world. What do you think of that prospect?

SCHAEFER: Definitely. It's definitely my sense of patriotism. I played poker for three years and got used to traveling and every time I saw my brothers and or some of his friends, I would be overcome with gratitude for their sacrifice. I would say, 'Thank you so much for doing what you do.' Giving you the freedom to do what you do. It's something I wanted to pay back because I felt gratitude. It is a sacrifice. It is putting yourself in harm's way. Something I felt deep down that I wanted to do at some point. Here I am, now.

QUESTION: Aren't poker and the military about as opposite as things could be?

SCHAEFER: Because I have not been to flight school yet, it hasn't really caught on that much. But I did get a taste of it where I saw hundreds of helicopters flying over. You really get into it. The soldier stuff -- I worked my butt off in basic training and officer school. I am finding myself to be very passionate about the military and military life in general. A lot of people don't like the military. There is a good and wholesome set of rules that you are supposed to live by when you are in the Army. I really feel passionate about upholding that and look forward to being an officer and being able to make sure people see that.

QUESTION: Do you feel the training you went through allowed you to have greater focus than before?

SCHAEFER: I walked into the Rio a few days ago and the first thing I saw was a hundred people on their cell phones telling a bad beat story. My God -- was I really a part of this for seven years? This is miserable. I put my headphones on and sat down at the table. My head was clear. I slowed down a bit and noticed that my heart rate was low and I was calm and thinking through hands clearly. It's weird how calm I was. When I was playing poker -- the gold bracelet is like the Holy Grail. It felt really good to win, but I never really thought about that. Obviously -- I lost 35 pounds during my training. As they say, 'healthy body equals healthy mind.'

ODDS AND ENDS

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #14, since it's the fourteenth gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Wednesday at noon and concluding Friday evening. Shootouts debuted at the 2002 WSOP. Both Limit and No-Limit Hold'em events were offered every year 2004-2010. But Limit Shootouts were discontinued the past two years. In its place, there have been two No-Limit events held each year, since 2009.

This year's other No-Limit Hold'em Shootout has a \$3,000 buy-in.

The first-ever WSOP Shootout champion was Joel Chaseman, in 2002.

Shootouts emphasize short-handed poker skills. This generally requires competitors to play cards out of the standard range of starting-hand requirements. It also makes post-flop skill paramount to victory. In a sense, each round is a "final table" for all the competitors since the objective is to accumulate chips and eliminate opponents.

A shootout tournament means players advance based on winning a series of table matches. The shootout format is single elimination. The number of matches depends on the number of tournament entries. In this event, the winner was required to win each in a series of consecutive matches -- usually no more than 3 or 4.

Each match is played like a single-table satellite, with only one winner from each table.

The list of No-Limit Shootout champions from previous years includes:

- 2011 -- Mark Radoja (\$5,000 buy-in)
- 2011 -- Andrew Badecker (\$1,500 buy-in)
- 2010 -- Steven Kelly (\$1,500 buy-in)
- 2010 -- Joshua Tieman (\$5,000 buy-in)
- 2009 -- Jeff Carris (\$1,500 buy-in)
- 2009 -- Peter Traply (\$5,000 buy-in)

2008 – Jason Young (\$1,500 buy-in)
2008 – Phil Tom (\$5,000 buy-in)
2007 – Don Baruch (\$1,500 buy-in)
2006 -- David “the Dragon” Pham (\$1,500 buy-in)
2005 – Anthony Reategui (\$1,500 buy-in)
2004 -- Phi Nguyen (\$1,500 buy-in)

Previous Limit Hold’em Shootout winners include:

2010 – Brendan Taylor (\$1,500 buy-in)
2009 – Greg Mueller (\$1,500 buy-in)
2008 – Matthew Graham (\$1,500 buy-in)
2007 – Ram Vaswani (\$1,500 buy-in)
2006 -- Victoriano Perches (\$1,500 buy-in)
2005 -- Mark Seif (\$1,500 buy-in)
2004 -- Kathy Liebert (\$1,500 buy-in)
2003 – Layne Flack (\$1,500 buy-in)
2002 – Joel Chaseman (\$1,500 buy-in)

2012 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of Event #14, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (10): Chip Saechao, Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David Arsht, Brandon Schaefer
France (1): Aubin Cazals
Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov
Canada (1): Ashkan Razavi
The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit

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

United States (9): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David “Doc” Arsht, Brandon Schaefer
Thailand (1): Chip Saechao
Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov
France (1): Aubin Cazals
Iran (1): Ashkan Razavi
The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit

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 (2): Chip Saechao, John Monnette
Pennsylvania (2): Brian Hastings, David “Doc” Arsht
Illinois (1): Nick Jivkov
Alabama (1): Herbert Tapscott
Washington (1): Brandon Schaefer

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 (9): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Andy Bloch, Aubin Cazals, John Monnette, Ashkan Razavi, Vincent van der Fluit, Brian Hastings, Brandon Schaefer
Semi-Pros (2): Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov
Amateurs (3): Chip Saechao, Herbert Tapscott, David “Doc” Arsht

The streak of consecutive male gold bracelet winners (or put another way – no female winner) is currently at 233 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.

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

For official media photographs from the 2012 World Series of Poker, visit: www.pokernews.photoshelter.com

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