



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

**Official Report  
Event #18  
Seven-Card Razz  
Buy-In: \$2,500  
Number of Entries: 309  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$702,975  
Number of Places Paid: 32  
First Place Prize: \$182,793  
June 8-10, 2012**

## **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES**

Hellmuth Wins 12<sup>th</sup> – A Record Smashing Night at the WSOP

A Historic Night for Phil Hellmuth at the 2012 WSOP

All that Razz: Hellmuth Wins Non-Hold'em Event for the First Time

Longtime Grinder Don Zewin Takes Second – 23 Years After Third-Place Finish to Hellmuth in 1989 Main Event

Eighteen Gold Bracelets Won – 43 More at Stake!

## **TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW**

Phil Hellmuth, Jr. is the greatest poker player in the history of the universe. And if there's any doubt about that, just ask -- *Phil Hellmuth*.

But *talking the talk* is one thing.

*Walking the walk* is quite another.

Hellmuth not only walked the walk in the most recent WSOP tournament, held at the Rio Las Vegas. He circled the field and did a victory lap, ultimately dominating one of the most stacked WSOP final tables in recent memory. Consider that there were *six* former gold bracelets winners among the top eight finishers – with 20 combined victories.

Hellmuth won the \$2,500 buy-in Seven-Card Razz tournament, which concluded late on a Sunday night in front of a packed gallery of spectators surrounding the Pavilion stage. In a fitting bit of irony, just a few feet away from final table action were virtually all the remaining gold bracelets to be given away at this year's WSOP positioned in a teasing and tantalizing manner as if to say to "Go Ahead, Make *Your Day*."

Half of the sardined stargazers appeared to be cheering *for* Hellmuth. The other half (okay, maybe more) were cheering *against* Hellmuth. No surprise there. Hellmuth is used to his detractors. He even relishes the role of villain. All great athletes and legendary sports teams divide the public's rage and fancy, but there was one thing everyone in the crowd could agree upon -- that the Rio was the place to be at this very special moment in the poker universe. Each spectator

was one of a few hundred lucky souls witnessing poker history being made by one of the most skilled craftsmen at the very top of his game.

This conquest marked Hellmuth's record-smashing 12th WSOP gold bracelet, the most by any player in history. He collected \$182,793 in prize money – which for reasons any poker fan understands was the very last thing on the great one's mind as the precious amulet was uncased from the display and positioned around the poker king's saintly wrist. For Hellmuth -- the special significance attached to this victory -- *and the number 12* -- was the perfect symbol of a stellar career which shows no signs of recess.

Hellmuth now holds a comfortable -- and some might say insurmountable -- two-bracelet lead over his two closest rivals -- poker legends Doyle Brunson and Johnny Chan, who each have ten wins. Given his age - now 47, one must presume Hellmuth isn't quite finished yet, nor is he ready to hang it up and call it a career.

If any suspense remained about Hellmuth's next big score in poker, it wasn't so much *if* but *when* he would finally hit the magical milestone of one-dozen WSOP wins. Yet, what is most surprising about tonight's victory is that it came playing a game not normally associated with Hellmuth's undisputed reputation as a Hold'em master.

Indeed, all of Hellmuth's 11 previous gold bracelet wins had taken place in one form of Hold'em or another -- Limit, Pot-Limit, and No-Limit, you name it. Of those, his most memorable win was clearly his initial triumph which took place in the 1989 Main Event Championship, where he defeated nemesis Johnny Chan in heads-up play and launched what would become an international dynasty that eventually transcended the green felt.

Year by year as he stacked bracelet upon gold bracelet and earned cash after cash, Hellmuth built what would become a pyramid of self-worship, manifested in a "bad boy" image and marketing empire that catapulted him into arguably the most famous poker player in the world.

By the mid-2000s, Phil Hellmuth wasn't merely a poker champion. He had become a living, breathing, crying, screaming, fist-pumping, whining, money-making, individual "brand" and sideshow carnival all unto himself, relishing every victory and defeat while the public wallowed in the movement of his shadow.

Along the way to hyper super-stardom, there were sweetheart deals from those bearing gifts. All sought the occasion to snuggle at the altar of the Phil Hellmuth business empire. First, it was a major online poker site. Then, a phone company came calling. Next, a brand of beer wanted Hellmuth's face on their cans, thereby giving brew guzzlers some esoteric delight in emptying a 16-ounce tall boy and then pulverizing a mini-pint of aluminum emblazoned with "the Poker Brat's face" with a single stomp. After that, it was a clothing line. The macabre of absurdity had finally been reached. Ralph Lauren. Christian Dior. *Phil Hellmuth*. Could dog food and diapers be too far behind?

But as the endorsement deals and dollars consistently rolled into the kingdom, as the sycophants continued to pump up the Hellmuth ego balloon the size of a zeppelin, something seemed to happen to Phil Hellmuth -- the poker player. You know, *the player* -- the great talent that has won and won and won and won again when the stakes were highest and things counted the most.

Hellmuth's performance didn't exactly slide, no, but there was a period when he wasn't able to quite match the glorious accomplishments of yesteryear. Six years ago, for instance, he fell behind Johnny Chan in the gold bracelet chase. The gaps between wins began to reach multiple years. He did manage to seize the all-time wins lead for the first time, in 2007 -- arguably his second-greatest triumph. But in the three-year span afterward while the business deals were whirling, the best finish Hellmuth could muster was a third-place showing in 2008. By the start of the 2011 WSOP last year, there was also the problem that appears to be the immovable elephant in the room for every old-school poker pro, including Hellmuth -- it's called the young twenty-something revolution.

All of this made Hellmuth's four final-table appearances last year "must see" poker theater. In each of his final matches, Hellmuth faced a series of brutally tough lineups that included some of the best tournament specialists in the world. By the time the series came to a close, Hellmuth had cemented a record that is staggering to ponder, yet at the same time -- dubious in the alternate universe of Hellmuth-think. For the first time in history, a player finished second *three times*. Second place might be acceptable to many players, but not Hellmuth. Anything other than first place is "unacceptable," he once famously said.

On Sunday night -- five years to the very day when the great one had won gold bracelet number 11 -- one had to wonder if Hellmuth would again fall short. All that stood between Hellmuth and perennial ecstasy was a poker pro named Don Zewin, who in a bamboozling bit of bitter irony finished third in the 1989 world championship won by Hellmuth 23 years ago. The two poker combatants -- polar opposites in terms of disposition and imagery -- traded chips back and forth like two prizefighters deadlocked in a tie during the middle a championship fight.

Then, with everything on the line and the entire poker world watching and waiting, out of nowhere -- *it happened*. It all

came so quickly. Suddenly, Zewin was all-in. Hellmuth had his opponent on the ropes. The crowd rose to its feet. There were screams and shouts. Then, there was one final card and Hellmuth ultimately triumphed, which was a final-fisted glove to the hopes of the challenger.

Hellmuth won. Everyone else lost. All was right again on Planet Hellmuth. Proper balance had returned to the universe.

The circus never ends. It's the greatest poker show on earth.

## MEET THE LATEST WSOP CHAMPION – PHIL HELLMUTH

Name: Phil Hellmuth, Jr.

Birthplace: Madison, WI (USA)

Age: 47 (born July 16, 1964)

Childhood: Wisconsin (USA)

Current Residence: Palo Alto, CA (USA)

Marital Status: Married

Children: 2

Education: Attended University of Wisconsin (did not graduate)

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 89

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 45

Number of WSOP gold bracelet victories (with this tournament): 12

Best Previous WSOP finish: 1<sup>st</sup>

Total WSOP Earnings: \$8,048,640

## WINNER QUOTES (POST-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW)

**Question:** *Five years to the day. How does it feel to finally get to number 12?*

**Hellmuth:** Oh my god, it feels so good. Are you kidding me? Last June 1<sup>st</sup>—according to millions of players on the Internet—I was a horrible player. By July 1<sup>st</sup>, I was then, you know, one of the greatest players. So, I mean, people are results-oriented, and they should be in life. So, I don't have a problem with that. If you want to be great in our game, you have to win. So, it feels so good to me because it's been so long. I mean, three seconds last year, looking back, it was a great year. But I told everyone, "Listen, if I can have three seconds in the modern era, why can't I have three firsts?" And so, that's kinda' the way I've been thinking. I played phenomenal this trip. I mean, I've already moneyed four times. I'm kinda' proud of the fact that I busted out of the Stud-Eight or better, 15<sup>th</sup>. And I was really smart; I didn't hop into the Pot-Limit Hold'em, which is a great event for me. I went with my wife back...you know, slept for two or three hours, had some food, then hopped into the Razz. And then hard to believe that on the same day that I finished 15<sup>th</sup>, I ended up with the chip lead in the Razz. Just pretty phenomenal, is the way things are going right now. Right now, the game just makes sense to me, except for Stud-High. I feel like I'm still a donkey in Stud-High. I'm pretty good, but I mean...but all the games make sense to me. It's a beautiful, beautiful place to be. And I've worked really hard to get there.

**Question:** *How important is it that the #12 came in a non-Hold'em event?*

**Hellmuth:** You know, after three seconds (last year), I don't think people were bringing up the Hold'em quite as much anymore. But still, I'll take it. I felt like I was supposed to win the Deuce-Seven last year, but Juanda played great. I feel like I was supposed to win the Players' Championship, and you know, Rast played great, and I just missed a bunch of hands. And I really thought I was gonna' win the Stud-Eight or Better two days ago. I kept thinking, "Wow." I kept seeing myself as the winner. Who knew it was going to be two days later instead in the Razz. So, I'm pretty pleased right now.

**Question:** *Describe the difference between second and first, personally and as a professional.*

**Hellmuth:** Yeah. I mean, it's not necessarily a flip of the coin. What was I, 84 percent to beat Rast in the Players' Championship, if you added up the hands we played where I was all-in? It's never just a flip. I mean, you set yourself up by playing great for three or four days, to have a chip lead or not have a chip lead. Zewin's a great player, and I knew this. He's a professional cash game player since the 80s. When it was Chan and I at the final table, he finished third, in 1989 in the Main Event. So, I've been playing with him for decades, and he is just tough as nails. And he's not gonna' give anything away. He played just beautifully at the final table. He kept himself out of trouble, waited and picked his spots. And he did the same thing against me. When he got down to 300,000 and then surged back up to 800,000, I was starting to...I tried to push the negative thoughts out of my mind and just say, "Listen, you have one thought: play great poker."

**Question:** *Is Phil Hellmuth superstitious?*

**Hellmuth:** Am I superstitious? Let's put it this way: I don't believe in bad luck. Let's put it that way. If I'm sitting in a position at the table, and I'm winning every hand, and somebody tries to move me...then that's not only superstition; that's also a ploy on their part. Brandon Cantu is a great guy, and he was just asking for space. But I was winning every hand in that seat! I didn't want to move over. And then I realized that I was probably being unreasonable—and I love Cantu—so I finally did move over. And I won even more pots, so we can throw away superstition.

**Question:** *How many bracelets do you think you will have before your career is over?*

**Hellmuth:** 24.

**Question:** *Did you think about last year, when you were heads-up?*

**Hellmuth:** I thought about last year...yeah, during the heads-up, during the three-handed, during the four-handed, during the five-handed. But when I had the big chip lead, I felt like I was gonna' get heads-up with somebody. And when it came to past, it was great. So, now it's a first or second. I just don't want another second. Please let me win this. But you try not to think about that. You try to just think—it sounds simple—but just one thought: you try to just play perfect poker. It just kept going through my mind.

**Question:** *Was there any pressure from Ivey tonight (playing for his ninth win at the same time as Hellmuth's victory)?*

**Hellmuth:** I try not to think about Ivey. I went into the room by myself for a minute, and I started thinking about Ivey...and I started thinking about Ivey. And then I lied down and meditated for a second, and I said, "Alright. What's wrong with you?" Phil Ivey is a great player, and he's gonna' do what he's gonna' do. But you need to worry about what you're doing.

**Question:** *Who's better, Ivey or you?*

**Hellmuth:** We'll let history judge that.

**Question:** *If he would've won tonight, then it'd be 11 to 9, instead of 12 to 8.*

**Hellmuth:** It's a huge swing. Obviously, Phil Ivey is an amazing player. I was not rooting against Ivey. I never rooted against Chan. I never rooted against Seidel, ever. I mean, rooting against people is just too much negative energy for me. I just feel like...there's people I do root against. There's no one on the planet that I do root against, honestly. And I always figured that if (Doyle) or Chan won a bracelet, it's just great for everybody. And it might push me harder.

**Question:** *Were you rooting against Don Zewin?*

**Hellmuth:** I was rooting for myself over Don Zewin. I was rooting for myself; let's put it that way.

**Question:** *When you are 85 and Ivey is 73, whose gonna' have more bracelets?*

**Hellmuth:** That I don't know. I can't answer that question. I feel like I'll have 24 bracelets at age 85, and if Ivey beats that, then congratulations.

**Question:** *When he won a few years ago, Ivey said that he thinks he could win 30 in his career.*

**Hellmuth:** Well, if he is visualizing 30, then maybe he'll get there. It'll be a fun battle.

## **SPECIAL SECTION: RUNNER-UP DON ZEWIN**

Don Zewin finished second to Phil Hellmuth in this tournament. Ironically, Zewin was the third-place finisher in 1989, when Hellmuth bested Johnny Chan for the world championship. Zewin has a chance to extract some measure of revenge, but came up short. Here's a short report of Zewin's experience:

*Then, there's Don Zewin -- a completely different story. He endured a level of disappointment that may be impossible to comprehend. He finished second to Phil Hellmuth in the \$1,500 buy-in Seven-Card Razz event.*

*It was 23 years ago that Zewin, in his first WSOP cash ever, found himself sitting across the table from Phil Hellmuth and Johnny Chan in the 1989 WSOP Main Event Championship. Zewin went out in third place that year, a remarkable*

*accomplishment, but he's largely become a footnote in poker history since then, posting about \$200,000 in winnings spread out over two decades.*

*Late on Sunday night, Zewin has the chance of a lifetime, an opportunity to bury the beastly demons of disappointment at Binion's Horseshoe and reverse the roles of fortune.*

*To his credit, Zewin proved to be a tenacious competitor – a tiger in a cage refusing to relent and surrender in the spotlight of the poker world's eye. Zewin fought back several times during the duo's three-hour heads-up showdown, but he ultimately came up short. It was like stepping in front of the roaring freight train of poker destiny.*

*On this most memorable night -- Ivey and Zewin, both sympathetic figures in their own very different way -- ended up playing unwelcome roles in a giant supporting cast that ultimately allowed others to shine as the stars.*

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #18, since it's the 18<sup>th</sup> gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Friday at noon and concluding Sunday night.

The final table began at 4 p.m. and ended at 2:30 a.m.

Among the 10 former gold bracelet winners that cashed were Scott Fischman, Phil Hellmuth, Barry Greenstein, Brandon Cantu, Michael Chow, Brendan Taylor, Chris Viox, Scott Clements, Allen Bari, and Ted Forrest.

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 p.m. 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.

## **2012 WSOP STATISTICS**

Through the conclusion of Event #18, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (14): Chip Saechao, Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Phil Hellmuth

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 (13): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Phil Hellmuth

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:

California (3): Chip Saechao, John Monnette, Phil Hellmuth

Nevada (2): Brent Hanks, Andy Bloch

Florida (2): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman

Pennsylvania (2): Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht

New York (2): Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger

Illinois (1): Nick Jivkov

Alabama (1): Herbert Tapscott

Ohio (1): Adam Friedman

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 (13): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Andy Bloch, Aubin Cazals, John Monnette, Ashkan Razavi, Vincent van der Fluit, Brian Hastings, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Phil Hellmuth

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 237 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](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)*

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