



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

Official Report

Event #27

H.O.R.S.E.

Buy-In: \$1,500

Number of Entries: 889

Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,200,150

Number of Places Paid: 96

First Place Prize: \$267,081

June 13-16, 2012

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

Ylon Schwartz Wins First WSOP Gold Bracelet

"Tenth Planet" Flies Away with HORSE Championship

Former New York City Chess Hustler Declares "Checkmate" for First Time at WSOP

21 of 27 Gold Bracelets Won By Americans – To Date

27 Gold Bracelets Won – 34 More at Stake!

TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

"The Unbearable Likeness of Being Ylon Schwartz"

If Ylon Schwartz doesn't take another breath on this Earth and somehow vanishes instantly, he will have already lived a life that most would describe as bizarre. Perhaps even exceptional.

The former chess master and professional poker player originally from New York City won his first World Series of Poker gold bracelet today, after topping a brutally-competitive field of nearly 900 players in the \$1,500 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. tournament (Event #27). The former "November Niner," who finished fourth in the 2008 WSOP Main Event Championship, out-dueled David Chiu, a three-time gold bracelet winner in heads-up play, finally managing to defeat his formidable foe on an unscheduled fourth day of competition.

Indeed, the entire 40-plus hour duration of the tournament was a supreme test of mental and physical fortitude for Schwartz, who cut his competitive teeth in the musty chess backrooms of Brooklyn and anachronistic park-scene of Manhattan, an atypical background which unquestionably provided a competitive pedigree and strategic edge over many of the world's best all-around poker players now assembled in Las Vegas.

Schwartz's victory in this event, once again, validated H.O.R.S.E.'s long-held reputation as poker's superlative trial and tribulation on the question of comprehensive skill. The game requires one to master, not just one form of poker, but five games in all – including Hold'em, Omaha High-Low Split, Razz, Seven-Card Stud, and Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split. The format is deceptively geared towards Stud enthusiasts (after all, three of the five games are dealt in a Stud format), which naturally favors players from the Northeastern United States, a region which has traditionally been a hotbed of Stud action over the past two generations.

But Schwartz, for all his natural talent and vested commitment, is hardly conventional – either as a poker player or as a person. Aside from his anarchistic look -- equal parts college professor and Rastafarian -- Schwartz is a man who very much does things his way. Alas, if Albert Einstein had a love child with Bob Marley, it would probably look something like Ylon Schwartz.

Known at one time by his (former) online poker screen name “TenthPlanet,” Schwartz was once asked by a reporter where he was born.

“Outer space,” was his reply.

An only child, Schwartz actually grew up in Manhattan -- which might just as well be outer space to just about everyone else in the pedestrian universe. At an early age, he became fascinated by the rabidly anti-establishment underground chess scene, a hodgepodge of vagrants and uber-geniuses which produced the likes of prodigy and eventual madman Bobby Fischer. While still in his teens, he began playing chess regularly in public parks and managed to win \$2 the very first time he played the game for real money. In a sense, Schwartz’s path in life became set at that very instant.

Schwartz reportedly hustled chess games for decades. Arguably, just one step up from being a Three-Card Monte dealer in the minds of all the similarly-smart “Manhattanites” that went on to college and joined the establishment, Schwartz could at least boast he was using his brains and talent to make a bona fide living. He also answered to no one. Of course, that “living” consisted of a meager subsistence during most of the time. He tried college, became bored, and flunked out. He was hired for odd jobs, but was never able to quite fit in. Each time he tried to depart from the comfortable, if unprofitable, path of “being Ylon Schwartz,” the temporary detour would lead back to chess and gambling games – or more precisely the people who played them.

Realizing the obvious limitations of his skill set, Schwartz’s focus moved beyond chess. He became proficient at backgammon, darts, and other competitive endeavors that increasingly morphed into gambling. Schwartz was also a fixture at New York’s racetracks, constantly searching for the Holy Grail betting system that just barely managed to escape the clutch of every gambler.

By 2000, Schwartz was on a dead end path to nowhere. He bottomed out at one point and became homeless for a short time -- oddly enough, a predicament that he neither regrets nor bemoans. For all of Schwartz’s idiosyncrasies, he would eventually discover that living the life on the edge as a master gamesman would prove to be the perfect training ground for the next stage of his life.

One day, Schwartz was taught the rules of Texas Hold’em by a friend. He began playing in the underground poker clubs scattered throughout Manhattan and even managed to make a big score one of the first times he played. Realizing that poker provided a much greater opportunity for financial gain than chess, not to mention providing another avenue that fueled his competitive spirit, Schwartz began to take poker just as seriously as he’d studied chess and other games.

To Schwartz, the similarities between chess and poker were obvious. But it was the differences in the two games that fascinated Schwartz, for which he was able to gradually make adjustments, eventually becoming a seasoned poker veteran, despite having relatively little live game or tournament experience. The primary difference, according to Schwartz was that chess was a game of complete information. Poker was a game of incomplete information. In a sense as in the case with any great undiscovered mystery, the later was much the more fascinating.

Between 2000 and 2008, Schwartz continued to grind out a living as a master gamesman, consistently concealing his real talent for the purposes of survival. Year by year, poker became an increasing percentage of his earnings. Yet no one – most certainly not Schwartz himself – could have imagined the cosmic shift that was to come when he won a seat in the 2008 WSOP Main Event by playing at one of the online poker sites.

Schwartz became one of the very first “November Nine” finalists. He took fourth in the WSOP Main Event that year, collecting the mind-boggling sum of \$3,774,974 in prize money – a ghastly financial boon for a man who once considered a \$100 profit playing chess to be a “great day.”

Stoked with a bankroll for the first time, Schwartz made several notable changes in his life – first and foremost deciding to move from New York City to Austin, Texas – a place he now describes as a city with the “perfect balance.”

Since becoming semi-famous as a poker celebrity, Schwartz has been playing on the tournament circuit. He’s managed to cash numerous times in majors, including the WSOP. However, as many times as Schwartz went deep, he always failed to win. At one point, Schwartz began earning the nickname, “the teenager,” an apt moniker given his penchant for always seeming to cash in the teens (13th through 19th).

Up through last Wednesday, Schwartz had cashed 22 times in six years at the WSOP – certainly an impressive record of accomplishment buoyed by the huge bonus of making a Main Event final table. At the same time, Schwartz’s name began appearing with increasing frequency on the unofficial list of top players without a gold bracelet.

And so, Schwartz entered Event #27 and took his seat in a sea of 889 of the world's best all-around players.

Not being from this world, "Tenth Planet" played the best poker of his life. He not only outlasted all earthly poker beings, he vanquished them one-by-one....by making one decision at a time....one move at a time....one small victory at a time. Just as he'd done decades earlier on the concrete chess flats of Washington Square Park, Schwartz out-thought, outmaneuvered, and outplayed each and every challenger who was unfortunate enough to draw the opposite seat. Only this time, the hustle wasn't worth a mere \$2. This win paid a staggering \$267,081, plus a WSOP gold bracelet.

Schwartz's victory gives him his first WSOP title, to go along with 22 previous cashes, and \$4,426,090 in career WSOP earnings.

For Schwartz, a word that departed his breath innumerable times over chessboards during the past 30 years were spoken quietly at a poker table for the very first time. And that word was -- checkmate.

MEET THE LATEST WSOP CHAMPION – YLON SCHWARTZ

Name: Ylon Schwartz

Age: 42

Childhood: Manhattan, New York City

Education: Attended Manhattan Community College (dropped out)

Current Residence: Austin, Texas

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 23

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 4

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

Best Previous WSOP finish: 3rd (2008)

Total Career WSOP Earnings: \$4,426,090

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE WINNER

Question: *So, how does it feel to finally win?*

Schwartz: I'm super happy to get this bracelet. I've been banging away, knocking at the door a bunch of times. Forever I was finishing at the second (to last table). They would call me "the teenager" -- I was finishing 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th. Then finally I got the fourth, and then third and now I finally broke through. It's an amazing feeling.

Question: *Does your extensive chess background help you with a game like H.O.R.S.E.?*

Schwartz: Just sitting on my duff all day in the park was good just to learn patience. It's not easy to sit there forever. Playing many different games definitely helps adjusting to the stages of the tournament and this is really about management. I think positional play might be more relevant than tactical play (in H.O.R.S.E.). You might not play a hand perfectly, but managing the spots and understanding what people think of you can give you some benefit in a leg where you've been passive and you know they're memorizing your tendencies. It's more about tournament management from my point of view. I know a lot of these young kids like to extract every last bit of value from a hand and I think that's really hard to do in a three-day tournament. You're better off not losing an extra bet. Holding onto your chips is more important.

Question: *Talk about playing David Chiu heads-up.*

Schwartz: I thought I was going to go heads-up with Chiu. Actually, when the final table started that's what I envisioned. The limits were super high, and it really doesn't matter who your opponent is at that point. You just start auto-betting. When I had a chip lead I just sent it. That's, I think, the right thing to do.

Question: *The November Nine fourth-place finish was a lot more money, but you didn't win. This was much less, but you won. Which is better?*

Schwartz: I feel about the same. The (Main Event) was obviously a more wild, rollercoaster experience. Going through all those days to get to that place and having all that money for people close to you to try to borrow....When I made that score, it was all of the sudden, 'I want to do this, I want to do that.' People calling me I hadn't heard from in 10 or 20 years. I don't think this will be as intense.

Question: *How's life in Austin (Texas)? How different is it and how much are you enjoying it?*

Schwartz: I love Austin. New York City to Austin -- I mean, you can breathe in Austin. It's a beautiful place. It's mellow. There are no casinos there, which is good. That's where I go to decompress. Every summer, I'm always happy when people come and bring all the money to the building and I have a shot to try to relax for the rest of the year.

ODDS AND ENDS

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #27, since it's the 27th gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over four consecutive days, starting on Wednesday at 5 p.m. and concluding on a Saturday.

The final table began at 5 p.m. and ended at 2 a.m. (scheduled final day). Then, the final three players returned for an unscheduled second day, which lasted only about one hour. The total duration was about 9 hours – minus the breaks.

The final table included just one former gold bracelet winner – David Chiu (4 wins).

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 #27, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (21): 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, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Brian Meinders, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz
Canada (2): Ashkan Razavi, Simon Charette
France (1): Aubin Cazals
Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov
The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit
Belgium (1): Michael Gathy

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

United States (20): 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, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Brian Meinders, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz
Thailand (1): Chip Saechao
Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov
France (1): Aubin Cazals
Iran (1): Ashkan Razavi
The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit
Belgium (1): Michael Gathy
Canada (1): Simon Charette

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

Nevada (4): Brent Hanks, Andy Bloch, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy
California (3): Chip Saechao, John Monnette, Phil Hellmuth
Pennsylvania (3): Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Ben Scholl
Florida (2): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman
New York (2): Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger
Illinois (1): Nick Jivkov
Alabama (1): Herbert Tapscott
Ohio (1): Adam Friedman
Washington (1): Brandon Schaefer
Maryland (1): Cliff Goldkind
New Jersey (1): Brian Meinders
Oklahoma (1): Gabe Scott

Texas (1): Ylon Schwartz

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 (19): 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, Randy Ohel, Michael Gathy, Simon Charette, Joe Cassidy, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz

Semi-Pros (3): Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov, Brian Meinders

Amateurs (6): Chip Saechao, Herbert Tapscott, David "Doc" Arsht, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl

The streak of consecutive male gold bracelet winners (or put another way – no female winner) is currently at 246 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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