



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

**Official Report
Event #34
Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha
Buy-In: \$5,000
Number of Entries: 419
Total Net Prize Pool: \$1,969,300
Number of Places Paid: 42
First Place Prize: \$512,029
June 18-20, 2012**

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

Naoya Kihara Wins \$5,000 Buy-In Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha Title (Event #34)

Kihara Becomes First WSOP Gold Bracelet Winner in History from Japan

Will Naoya Kihara Become Japan's Chris Moneymaker?

30-Year-Old Tokyo Poker Pro Collects \$512,029 in Prize Money

The Scorecard: 34 Gold Bracelets Won – 27 More at Stake!

TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

Naoya Kihara made history tonight by becoming the first World Series of Poker gold bracelet winner from the nation of Japan in the 43-year history of the international tournament series.

Kihara won the \$5,000 buy-in Six-Handed Pot-Limit Hold'em championship, played at the Rio in Las Vegas. He topped a highly-competitive field of 419 players from more than 25 different countries. Kihara collected \$512,029 in prize money. But what seemed to matter most to the new poker champion was the realization that he'd done what no other Japanese player had ever done -- win a WSOP title.

Incredibly, prior to this day, no Japanese player had ever won poker's most prestigious prize -- although Maeda Azusa came very close last year. As part of WSOP Europe, Azusa finished second in the first gold bracelet event played at Cannes, France, which took place in 2011. Alas, despite Japan's sizable population, affluence, and high standard of living - the Asian nation remains behind much of the rest of the world when it comes to taking an active role in the global poker boom.

With Kihara's victory however, a great deal could change. He hopes not only to lock up a sponsorship deal with one of the major online poker sites, he also wants to become a poker ambassador in his home country, as well as throughout Asia. He's off to a great start as a promoter of the game. While playing at the final table, which took place on the third and final day of competition, Kihara was swarmed with hundreds of text messages and calls from 10,000 miles away. The relatively small poker market in Japan seemed to follow his every move on a live stream broadcast. No doubt, when Kihara dragged the final pot of the tournament, the small but fiercely-dedicated poker enthusiasts back in Japan erupted in an ultimate moment of celebration in what could potentially go down as his nation's "Chris Moneymaker moment."

Kihara is a 30-year-old professional poker player. He mostly plays online, although he now hopes to travel around the world and play in more live tournaments with this victory. Prior to playing full-time, Kihara was a private school teacher.

The runner-up was Chris DeMazi, who put up a good fight. But he was no match for what can only be described as destiny. Two former gold bracelet winners made it to the final table, including Davidi Kitai, who took fifth. Jason DeWitt finished eighth.

This was Kihara's second time to cash in a WSOP event. It's also the second year he has traveled from Tokyo to Las Vegas to play at the WSOP. Last year, Kihara played in the Main Event Championship, and cashed in 653rd place.

Not bad at all, Mr. Kihara -- cashing in the Main Event the first year and winning a gold bracelet in the second.

So, what's next?

The answer to that is – plenty of celebration in Japan, at least for now.

MEET THE LATEST WSOP CHAMPION – NAOYA KIHARA

Name: Naoya Kihara

Birthplace: Nayoro, Japan

Age: 30

Current Residence: Tokyo, Japan

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Former Profession: Private School Teacher

Number of WSOP Cashes: 2

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 1

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

Best Previous WSOP finish: 653rd (in 2011 WSOP Main Event Championship)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$531,388

Other Interesting Things: Hopes to become ambassador for the game of poker in Japan and throughout Asia

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE WINNER

Question: *Can you talk about the poker scene in Japan?*

Kihara: Poker is getting popular in Japan. The people who like poker like gambling as well. So, a lot of people joined online poker, and then improve their skills. And then more and more come to cheer. And then a second, third and fourth bracelet winner should appear, I think.

Question: *Is this your first year to play at the World Series of Poker?*

Kihara: My second one.

Question: *How many tournaments have you played?*

Kihara: Before, six side events and one Main Event. And then, I got a \$19,000 cash in the Main Event last year.

Question: *What does it mean to you to be the first Japanese WSOP winner? Is this special?*

Kihara: Yeah, that's right. Now, I'm living off poker. But I want to be a sponsored player. So, the first Japanese bracelet means the possibility of that will increase.

Question: *You talked about live poker being illegal in Japan. Do you disagree with that?*

Kihara: It should be legal. I think it's a really stupid law, but...

Question: *Do you think it will change?*

Kihara: I don't think so. That's why a lot of people in Japan go to Las Vegas and then play poker and the other games.

Question: *Is Pot-Limit Omaha your best game?*

Kihara: No. Actually, I think I'm not so good at Pot-Limit Omaha. I had around 2 million experiences in Hold'em and then 250 experiences in Omaha High-Low and I think only 150K in Pot-Limit Omaha. So, it's not my best game. Because of that, I tried to play ABC style. And then—especially yesterday—I really got lucky and lucky and lucky again. Every flip I won, so because of that, I ran so nice. And then I got the bracelet.

Question: *What is your screen name online?*

Kihara: Nkeyno.

Question: *How did you find out about poker?*

Kihara: My friend started online poker a half year before me. And he taught me. He played. And when I didn't know the rules, he taught me. He showed me the online game with four tables (multi-tabling). And then I saw behind him "six hours," and then I learned a lot.

Question: *You just won \$500,000. That's a lot of yen. What are you going to do with the money?*

Kihara: Right now, no idea. But I want to join a lot of live tournaments. Before, I don't have enough money, so I couldn't join too much tournaments. But now I have money, so I can join a lot of tournaments. So, I will increase my tournament winnings more.

Question: *You play for a living professionally. What do people in Japan think about that?*

Kihara: My parents don't like it. They know that but don't like it. My friends don't say bad about that because I have a lot of mahjong—which is a game in Japan—I have a lot of mahjong friends. I play that game also. My mahjong friends, they don't think gambling is a bad thing. So, it's not so bad from my friends.

ODDS AND ENDS

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #34, since it's the 34th gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas. The tournament was played over three consecutive days and nights, starting on Monday at noon and concluded on Wednesday night at 8:15 p.m.

The total duration of the final table was about five hours.

Aside from the final table players among the notable players who finished in the money were – former gold bracelet winners David Benyamine (14th) who was the end of Day One chip leader; two-time gold bracelet winner Brock Parker (36th); and former gold bracelet winner Dario Alioto (40th).

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

United States (26): 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, Larry Wright, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Max Steinberg

Canada (3): Ashkan Razavi, Simon Charette, Timothy Adams

France (1): Aubin Cazals

Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov

The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit

Belgium (1): Michael Gathy
Japan (1): Naoya Kihara

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

United States (25): 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, Larry Wright, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Max Steinberg

Canada (2): Simon Charette, Timothy Adams

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

Japan (1): Naoya Kihara

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of the 26 American winners has been:

Nevada (7): Brent Hanks, Andy Bloch, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker

California (4): Chip Saechao, John Monnette, Phil Hellmuth, Max Steinberg

Pennsylvania (3): Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Ben Scholl

Florida (2): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman

New York (2): Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger

Texas (2): Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright

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

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 (25): 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, Timothy Adams, Larry Wright, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Max Steinberg, Naoya Kihara

Semi-Pros (4): Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov, Brian Meinders, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman

Amateurs (5): Chip Saechao, Herbert Tapscott, David "Doc" Arsht, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl

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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