



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

**Official Report
Event #53
No-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In: \$1,500
Number of Entries: 3,166
Total Net Prize Pool: \$4,274,100
Number of Places Paid: 324
First Place Prize: \$737,248
June 30 - July 3, 2012**

TOURNAMENT HEADLINES

Jim Willerson Wins \$1,500 Buy-In No-Limit Hold'em (Event #53)

Dallas Attorney Collects \$737,248 Cash Settlement

Another Huge Field at 2012 WSOP – 3,166 Entrants

Moscow's Vladimir Mefodichev Finishes Second – Still No Russian Winners in 2012

TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

Neil James "Jim" Willerson won the most recent championship-level event at the 2012 World Series of Poker. The 36-year-old attorney from San Antonio, Texas won the \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament, classified as Event #53.

Willerson not only received the game's most coveted prize – the gold bracelet – but a whopping \$737,248 in prize money as well.

Willerson is used to competing -- and winning. He was the 1994 Texas State singles champion in tennis. He also played tennis while in college, where he attended Southern Methodist University and lettered for three-straight years.

However, this victory was a bit more profitable. The three-day competition drew another monster-sized field. The tournament began with 3,166 entrants on Saturday at noon, and concluded on a late Tuesday afternoon at the Rio in Las Vegas. In fact, the field size was so large and the final table play went so long that an unscheduled fourth day was added.

The runner-up was Vladimir Mefodichev, from Moscow, Russia. He had a shot to becoming the first Russian to win a gold bracelet this year. When heads-up play began, Mefodichev enjoyed about a 3 to 1 chip lead and it appeared he was going to join the likes of fellow countrymen Konstantin Puchkov, Alex Kravchenko and other Russians who have won poker's supreme achievement. But the Willerson played an extraordinary heads-up match and earned the biggest victory of his poker career.

MEET THE LATEST WSOP CHAMPION – JIM WILLERSON

Name: Neil James Willerson – goes by JIM WILLERSON

Age: 36

Birthplace: Dallas, TX

Residence: San Antonio, TX

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Education: Southern Methodist University (SMU)

Major: Law Degree

Profession: Attorney

WSOP Cashes: 6

WSOP Final Table Appearances: 1

WSOP Wins (with this victory): 1

WSOP-Related Earnings: \$805,360

Note: Willerson will be classified as an amateur poker player in WSOP records, since he has another full-time job.

INTERVIEW WITH THE WINNER

Question: *Lets back up to day one. You were up against more than 3,000 poker players. Is your goal on day one to make the money? Or, are you thinking -- I'm going to win it? What are you thinking going into a huge tourney like this?*

Willerson: Just try to put yourself into position. Just try to get some kind of a decent stack to where you at least have an opportunity to make a final table or something like that. Just try to get as many chips as I can.

Question: *You just won like \$700,000, a ridiculous amount of money for most people. Is it Life changing in some ways?*

Willerson: I think so. I mean, its way more than I have ever won before. I don't know yet what I'm going to do with it or anything yet.

Question: *What was your biggest poker win before this?*

Willerson: This year same type of event -- I won \$30,000.

Question: *What about the importance of the gold bracelet to you? What does that mean?*

Willerson: Well this is my goal. I wanted to win at least one bracelet and I wanted to make a deep run in the Main Event. Those were the two goals that I really wanted to do in poker. I don't know if I ever really believed that I would win -- especially in a field of over 3,000 like that.

Question: *You're an attorney. What kind of law do you practice?*

Willerson: I have a general practice. I use to work for the district attorney's office in San Antonio, Texas. Then, I went into private practice. I do a combination of things. I just have a practice office with two other lawyers and they have been texting me like crazy while I've been here.

Question: *Let's fast forward to heads up play.*

Willerson: I wanted to try and finish it last night. It wasn't because I felt like I had some advantage one way or the other. When I came out today, he came out really aggressive and he won the first five or six hands. I didn't have anything to really play with and fight back with. I kind of wanted to wait for a decent hand or an opportunity to get involved. I was like, 'come on let's get a little better here,' because it's a little embarrassing when someone wins the first several hands in a row against you. It looks bad at first.

Question: *How many events have you played this year?*

Willerson: I think a total of eight. I'm two for eight basically.

Question: *How many years have you attended the World Series of Poker?*

Willerson: Last year was the first year I came and really played the tournaments. I cashed a few times last year. The year before I just came and played the Main Event. This will be the third year that I'm playing in the Main Event.

ODDS AND ENDS

This is the 1,012th gold bracelet to be awarded in WSOP history. It is also the 1,006th WSOP event in history.

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #53, since it's the 53rd gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas.

The final table included only one former gold bracelet winner – Ryan Hughes (2 wins). He finished ninth.

The runner-up was Vladimir Mefodichev, from Korolyov, Russia. He enjoyed the highest finish by a Russian player so far, at this year's WSOP.

The top 324 finishers collected prize money.

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

United States (41): 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, Chris Tryba, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Dung "Gomer" Nguyen, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu, Joey Weissman, Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi, Steven Loube, Kenny Hsiung, Greg Hobson, Pete Vilandos, Yen Dang, Vanessa Selbst, Jim Willerson

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

Great Britain (1): Craig McCorkell

Germany (1): Jan-Peter Jachtmann

Ukraine (1): Okelsii Kovalchuk

Italy (1): Rocco Palumbo

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

United States (37): 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, Chris Tryba, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu, Joey Weissman, Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi, Steven Loube, Kenny Hsiung, Greg Hobson, Vanessa Selbst, Jim Willerson

Canada (2): Simon Charette, Timothy Adams
Vietnam (2): Dung “Gomer” Nguyen, Yen Dang
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
Great Britain (1): Craig McCorkell
Germany (1): Jan-Peter Jachtmann
Ukraine (1): Okelsii Kovalchuk
Italy (1): Rocco Palumbo
Greece (1): Pete Vilandos

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of the 41 American winners has been:

Nevada (8): Brent Hanks, Andy Bloch, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David “Bakes” Baker, Chris Tryba
New York (6): Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu, Joey Weissman, Vanessa Selbst
Texas (5): Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright, David “ODB” Baker, Pete Vilandos, Jim Willerson
California (4): Chip Saechao, John Monnette, Phil Hellmuth, Max Steinberg
Pennsylvania (3): Brian Hastings, David “Doc” Arsht, Ben Scholl
Florida (3): Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Michael “the Grinder” Mizrachi
Ohio (2): Adam Friedman, Kenny Hsiung
Alabama (1): Herbert Tapscott
Washington (1): Brandon Schaefer
Maryland (1): Cliff Goldkind
New Jersey (1): Brian Meinders
Oklahoma (1): Gabe Scott
Kansas (1): Dung “Gomer” Nguyen
Massachusetts (1): Ronnie Bardah
Georgia (1): Steven Loube
Alaska (1): Greg Hobson
Colorado (1): Yen Dang

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 (39): 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, Chris Tryba, Craig McCorkell, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Greg Ostrander, Okelsii Kovalchuk, Henry Lu, Rocco Palumbo, Joey Weissman, Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi, Kenny Hsiung, Greg Hobson, Yen Dang, Vanessa Selbst

Semi-Pros (6): Cory Zeidman, Nick Jivkov, Brian Meinders, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Jan-Peter Jachtman, Pete Vilandos

Amateurs (8): Chip Saechao, Herbert Tapscott, David "Doc" Arsht, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Dung "Gomer" Nguyen, Steven Loube, Jim Willerson

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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