



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

**Official Report  
Event #57  
Six-Handed No-Limit Hold'em  
Buy-In: \$10,000  
Number of Entries: 474  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$4,455,600  
Number of Places Paid: 48  
First Place Prize: \$1,136,197  
July 3 - 6, 2012**

## **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES**

Who Want to Be a Millionaire? Greg Merson Does!

Greg Merson Wins Six-Handed No-Limit Hold'em (Event #57)

Marylander Earns Becomes Instant Millionaire

Latest Winner Collects \$1,136,197 Top Prize

Merson Defeats Former Gold Bracelet Winner Keith Lehr in Heads-Up Play

## **TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW**

It may simply be known as "Event #57," but the No-Limit Hold'em tournament that ended after just one hand today was bigger and richer than every single WSOP Main Event Championship held up through 1999.

The \$10,000 buy-in Six-Handed No-Limit Hold'em tournament attracted 474 entrants – nothing out of the ordinary in the modern poker era. However, the latest champion earned a whopping \$1,136,197 in prize money – which is the third-largest prize of this year's WSOP.

The winner was Gregory Merson. He is a 24-year-old poker pro from Laurel, MD.

Merson not only received the game's most coveted prize – the gold bracelet, but the satisfaction that he beat one of the toughest fields in recent memory in doing so. This was his first WSOP victory.

Merson defeated an incredibly stacked field in this short-handed event. Since being introduced in 2009, the Six-Handed format continues to draw some of the most star-studded fields of the summer, and this Championship event was no exception.

Merson had to last three long days and nights and then come back and play one final hand on a fourth day to close out his tough final adversary.

The runner-up was Keith Lehr, a.k.a. "Lehr Jet" of Bossier City, Louisiana who won a nice consolation prize of \$701,757.

## MEET THE LATEST WSOP CHAMPION – GREG MERSON

Name: Gregory Merson

Birthplace: Washington, DC

Current Residence: Laurel, Maryland (also spends much of his time in Toronto, Ontario (Canada))

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Profession: Professional Poker Player (highly-experienced online player)

Education: Attended community college and University of Maryland (did not graduate)

WSOP Cashes: 5

WSOP Final Table Appearances: 1

WSOP Wins (with this victory): 1

First-place prize: \$1,136,197

*Note: Greg Merson will be classified as a professional poker player in WSOP records, since he plays poker full-time and has no other source of income.*

## INTERVIEW WITH THE WINNER

**Question:** *A million dollars. Actually, \$1,136,197. How does that feel?*

**Merson:** Yea! It's a pretty surreal experience. I don't really play any tournaments. My biggest tournament score was having 5 percent of someone who won PCA -- and I got \$75K for that. I don't really play. This is probably my 10<sup>th</sup> \$10K event, because I just play online cash. I never expected to have an opportunity to realistically win one of these, because they're so tough. The \$10K especially, shorthanded. It feels awesome.

**Question:** *Since you don't play a lot of tournaments, what compelled you to enter this event?*

**Merson:** Well, I play all Six-Max short-handed cash online and Heads-Up as well. So, these tournaments structure my skill set better than the full ring ones, because all I do is play Six-Max online. When I get to play against a tournament this deep, it feels like I'm playing a cash game. So I'm way more comfortable than playing full ring with 30 big blinds and the pre-flop war, which I'm not too good at. I t's better playing post-flop.

**Question:** *Did you get a little disgruntled after coming close in the Four-Handed event, or did that motivate you to try to win it all?*

**Merson:** No, that was such a cool experience and I had gone deep in a few [events] over the last few years. That was my first deep run in a World Series event. I had just enjoyed that experience and knew that one day, getting to that final table (even though it wasn't an official final table) would help me to be more comfortable and enjoy the moment. This is just a bonus. I don't know how the tournament players do this for a living. It's just a crazy way to make a living. I almost feel guilty when I'm eliminating them, because this is how they pay their bills and I just want to play for fun and do well, but if I bust, it's whatever.

**Question:** *What did you do after Black Friday?*

**Merson:** I moved to Toronto.

**Question:** *How long have you been there?*

**Merson:** It'll be a year, later this month.

**Question:** *Did you play the WSOP last year, and then move?*

**Merson:** I flew straight from here to Toronto, liked it, and decided to move there.

**Question:** *Would you give us, aside from poker, a little more about you, where you grew up?*

**Merson:** I've actually never really worked a nine-to-five job. I worked for my best friend's dad and my uncle who are both entrepreneurs and worked when I was 16 or 17 for them. Both jobs only lasted less than a month. That's when I started

playing poker. I went to University of Maryland at age 17 and lasted two and a half semesters, dropped out, took my first shot at poker. It didn't go too well, but that's what I knew I wanted to do. So, I went back to community college to make my parents happy and to get by doing the bare minimum, knowing that eventually I was going to do this. Then, when I dropped out the second time, you should have seen their faces. They thought I was crazy, but I worked really hard. My first year I must have played 70 hours a week online. No exaggeration. *(interview stops – Merson becomes emotional)*

**Question:** *You're going to be able to call your parents now. What do you think they're going to say after seeing this?*

**Merson:** I don't know. My dad gets here tomorrow. I never expected to be so emotional. *(interview ends with Merson in tears).*

## ODDS AND ENDS

This is the 1,016<sup>th</sup> gold bracelet to be awarded in WSOP history. It is also the 1,010<sup>th</sup> WSOP event in history.

This was classified as WSOP schedule Event #57, since it's the 57<sup>th</sup> gold bracelet of 61 to be awarded this summer in Las Vegas.

The final table included three former gold bracelet winners – Timothy Adams, Layne Flack, and Keith Lehr.

The runner-up was Keith "Lehr Jet" Lehr, from Bossier City, LA. This was his most lucrative WSOP cash – which paid \$701,757.

2010 world champion Jonathan Duhamel finished in 38<sup>th</sup> place. This was his fifth cash of the year.

The top 48 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 #57, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (44): Chip Saechao, Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsh, 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, Will Jaffe, Antonio Esfandiari, Greg Merson

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

Czech Republic (1): Tomas Junek

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

United States (40): 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, Will Jaffe, Antonio Esfandiari, Greg Merson

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

Czech Republic (1): Tomas Junek

Through the conclusion of this event, the home state of the 44 American winners has been:

Nevada (9): Brent Hanks, Andy Bloch, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Chris Tryba, Antonio Esfandiari

New York (7): Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu, Joey Weissman, Vanessa Selbst, Will Jaffe

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

Maryland (2): Cliff Goldkind, Greg Merson

Alabama (1): Herbert Tapscott

Washington (1): Brandon Schaefer

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 (43): 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, Will Jaffe, Antonio Esfandiari, Tomas Junek, Greg Merson

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](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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