



2012 World Series of Poker Europe  
Hotel Majestic Barriere / Le Croisette Casino Barriere  
Cannes, France  
Official Report  
Event #5

Mixed-Max: No-Limit Hold'em  
Buy-In: €10,000 (+ 450)  
Number of Entries: 96  
Total Prize Pool: €921,600  
Number of Places Paid: 16  
First Place Prize: €258,047  
September 27-October 1, 2012

### **Tournament Headlines**

Jonathan Aguiar Finally Wins a WSOP Gold Bracelet

Combative and Combustible LA-Poker Pro Wins Mixed-Max at WSOP Europe

Tension-Filled Finale Ends with Controversy

Runner-Up Brandon Cantu Denied Career Third Gold Bracelet

WSOP 'Player of the Year' Race Down to Last Event of 2012

### **Tournament Overview**

Cannes, France (October 1, 2012) – It was one of the most unusual gold bracelet events in World Series of Poker history.

It was a poker tournament with a combination of dramatic moments, controversies, blistering criticism, and even some uneasy tension. Indeed, the Mixed-Max played at WSOP Europe in Cannes tested the willpower of just about everyone who witnessed

the €10,450 buy-in battle royale.

Yet, none of this mattered once the final hand of a grueling multi-day competition was dealt on a rainy Monday afternoon at Hotel La Majestic Barriere, nestled along the famous French Riviera. In fact, the historical record will likely show little more than a headline with the winner's name, collecting a well-deserved €258,047 in prize money, along with a long-awaited gold bracelet.

That blazing headline goes to one of poker's most passionate voices, Jonathan Aguiar, from Los Angeles, CA. Previous to this victory, he'd cashed 15 times at the WSOP, including an emotionally-shattering third-place showing earlier this year.

Aguiar cited his late grandfather for providing the spiritual inspiration to conquer what has been an immovable mountain in the way of a breakthrough WSOP victory.

"I'm not really a religious person," Aguiar said afterward. "But I really felt my grandfather, who was such a big part of my life with me here today."

To say Aguiar earned this victory would be an understatement. Not only did he have to outlast the world's top Mixed-Max players, many of whom reside in Europe and benefit from this unique poker variant being played online in various forms (such as 9-handed, 6-handed, and heads-up), he was specifically tested by both the ferocity of his opponents as well as the distractions of playing overlapping €10,000-level buy-in events.

The tournament was originally scheduled as a three-day affair. However, as the third day played deep into the night and came around to the next morning, it became necessary to extend the conclusion to an unscheduled fourth day. The problem was – the WSOP Europe Main Event was to begin on what would have been the fourth day. And so, the two finalists agreed to postpone the last stages of the heads-up match until two days later. Hence, this was one of the very few non-Main Events in history ever to span six combined days.

Moreover, there were plenty of moments of tension and controversy. Arguably the most riveting moment came during the grueling semi-final heads-up match between eventual runner-up Brandon Cantu and Roger Hairabedian, the first French player ever to win a gold bracelet on French soil – a triumph which happened the day before this event started. During their mind-numbing eight-hour match, the two players argued incessantly, to the point where tournament officials had to intervene. Clashes extended into the row of spectators, where French and American players rooting on each of their native sons became verbally combative. It was a scene more reminiscent of an international soccer match rather than a poker tournament.

Then, there were tension-filled hands where floor rulings were necessary. One incident required the review of surveillance tapes to determine the how the course of events had proceeded.

Then, there was the blistering heads-up battle following Cantu's victory in the semi-finals, when (after a one-hour recess) he had to go and face the player who ultimately

would come to deny Cantu who would have been a third gold bracelet – the robustly combative John Aguiar.

Part one of Cantu-Aguiar match would initially last five exhausting hours. By the end of the third day, Cantu had played a staggering 15 hours of heads-up poker. The match was forcibly suspended at 5 am, due to French law requiring gaming to end at the morning hour. Afterwards, this did not sit well with Cantu, who would later vent his frustration in a filmed interview.

Once both players were eliminated from the Main Event on Day 1B, the finalists retook seats in the hotel ballroom which is accustomed to drama. Held in the same events room that hosts showings of the prestigious Cannes Film Festival, this real-life poker drama played out not on the big screen but the green felt.

The final scene came about an hour into the resumption of play when Aguiar won a race holding A-K suited versus Cantu's pocket deuces. An ace flopped, ultimately giving Aguiar the victory.

“It’s the only time I’ve been robbed of a gold bracelet,” Cantu said in a video interview with PokerNews. “I wanted to play on (at the end of day three)...He (Aguiar) had no chance to win since he was worn out, but the postponement gave him time to come back and be fresh today.”

In the middle of the interview, Cantu stormed away – still visibly angry with the turnout.

Naturally, Aguiar had an entirely different perspective.

“It’s been a long time coming,” said Aguiar. “You play this game for a long time, and this is all you want. And now to win an event like this and to play for so long...it’s such a once-in-a-lifetime experience to be heads-up for a gold bracelet. Winning this is a dream come true.”

If there weren’t enough oddities already, this event also posed an almost inconceivable outcome regarding nationality of gold bracelet winners. Prior to Event 5 and Event 6 here at WSOP Europe, no player from the nation of Portugal had ever won a WSOP gold bracelet. After Francisco Da Costa Santos (from Porto) won Event 6 which ended a few days earlier, Aguiar also claims Portugal as his home country. That means players with a link to Portugal have won back to back gold bracelets.

This was the fifth of seven gold bracelet events scheduled at Cannes. Officially listed as Event 5, the Mixed-Max tournament attracted 96 entries. The total prize pool came to €921,600. The top 16 finishers were awarded prize money.

## **Meet the Champion**

Full Name: Jonathan Aguiar

Hometown: Las Vegas, NV

Birthplace: Portugal

Occupation: Professional Poker Player

Family: Single

Total WSOP Cashes: 16

Total WSOP Final Table Appearances: 3

First WSOP Cash: 2007

Total Career WSOP Earnings: €648,652

Dedicated Win: To late grandfather

## Winner Quotes

*On how it feels to win the gold bracelet:*

“It’s been a long time coming. You play this game for a long time, and this is all you want. To win and event like this, in this way, and to play for so long and to spend so much time waiting while other matches were going on and having to come back and play the Main Event – it’s all been a once-in-a-lifetime experience to be heads-up for a bracelet for so long. You try to put it out of your mind. You have to prepare yourself mentally for this. It’s a dream come true.”

*On the (interrupted) six-hour heads-up match versus Brandon Cantu:*

“I think it boils down to Brandon showed some emotions and I didn’t. Some of my friends are the very best in the world at heads-up poker. There’s no way to quantify the amount of confidence that I get from them, and for them to keep telling me to just play my game, and it would come. And it did.”

*On the Mixed-Max format which plays 9-handed, and then 6-handed, and then heads-up:*

“I don’t think anyone who played this tournament knows how much heads-up poker I played and how confident I am at it. I’m well-regarded as one of the biggest nits in poker. But then I get heads-up and I play almost all my buttons. That took every one of my opponents off guard and it took them too much time to adjust. I won’t have that advantage next time. I knew that if I got heads up, I would have a really good chance at a bracelet.”

*On dedicating his gold bracelet to his late grandfather:* “It all comes down to when I was playing in my first World Series. My grandfather passed away while I was in Las Vegas, that summer. I decided that I was going to win a gold bracelet for him. It took a lot longer than I expected. I was real close a few times. I’m not a real religious person. But I felt him here with me, in this tournament with me. I felt he was pushing me across

the finish line. I think it all comes down to that. I wanted this for a lot of reasons. But I wanted it for him, the most.”

### **Other in-the-Money Finishers**

Gold bracelet winners who cashed included Brandon Cantu, Roger Hairabedian, Jennifer Tilly, Phil Hellmuth, Bertrand Grospellier, and Jason Mercier.

Hollywood actress Jennifer Tilly went out in the quarterfinals.

Phil Hellmuth’s elimination in the quarterfinals gives him 94 cashes for his career – the most of any player in history.

Konstantin Puchkov’s first cash at WSOP Europe gives him 12 for this calendar year, the most of any player in history within a single year.

### **2012 WSOP Bracelet Update**

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the nationality of 2012 WSOP champions, including all the events that took place in Las Vegas this summer, has been the following 66 players:

United States (43): 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 (2), Greg Merson, Nick Schulman, Ryan Eriqezzo

France (3): Aubin Cazals, Roger Hairabedian, Giovanni Rosadoni

Canada (2): Simon Charette, Timothy Adams

Vietnam (2): Dung “Gomer” Nguyen, Yen Dang

Portugal (2): Francisco De Costa Santos, Jonathan Aguiar

Thailand (1): Chip Saechao

Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov

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, Dominik Nitsche

Ukraine (1): Okelsii Kovalchuk

Italy (1): Rocco Palumbo

Greece (1): Pete Vilandos

Czech Republic (1): Tomas Junek

Russia (1): Viacheslav Zhukov

Tunisia (1): Imed Ben Mahmoud

*Report by Nolan Dalla*