



2011 World Series of Poker Presented by Jack Link's Beef Jerky  
Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino  
Las Vegas, Nevada

Official Report  
Event #53  
Ladies No-Limit Hold'em World Championship  
Buy-In: \$1,000  
Number of Entries: 1,055  
Total Net Prize Pool: \$949,500  
Number of Places Paid: 117  
First Place Prize: \$192,344  
July 1-3, 2011

## **TOURNAMENT HEADLINES**

My Bewildering, Magnificent, Exciting, Appalling and Thrilling Victory -- by Marsha Wolak

Marsha Wolak is Crowned Poker's Queen

Marsha Wolak Wins 2011 Ladies Poker World Championship

Lady Champion Rakes-In \$192,344 Pot

Full House at the 2011 WSOP -- Tournament Attendance Currently on a Record Pace

53 Gold Bracelets Won -- Five More Events Still to Go

## **OVERVIEW**

Absolutely *everything* that is **bewildering, magnificent, exciting, appalling and thrilling** about the contemporary poker scene was on full display in the 2011 World Series of Poker Ladies [No-Limit Hold'em World Championship](#), which concluded today at the Rio in Las Vegas.

Let's go through the entire gambit of adjectives, shall we?

## **BEWILDERING**

The Ladies World Poker Championship is much more than just a poker tournament. It's a celebration of women in the game of poker. The WSOP brings together more women than any other poker event or attraction in the world.

Yet, even though millions of women all over the globe now play poker, the odd fact remains that men continue to dominate tournament poker -- and the WSOP in particular -- in terms of sheer participation.

According to the most recent estimate, women make up about 4 percent of all open tournament fields at this year's WSOP. That's a bewildering statistic, since women make up slightly more than half of the general population. The percentage of women in most card rooms is certainly much higher than just 4 percent. There are many reasons fewer women than men play in major poker tournaments, and we'll leave it for others to debate and try and explain this complex issue. But the one thing just about everyone agrees on is more effort needs to be made to attract more women into the game.

## **MAGNIFICENT**

The WSOP has been doing its share to support women in poker for the past 34 years. In fact, the WSOP hosted the very first ladies poker event in history. What later became known as the Ladies World Poker Championship, debuted in 1977. The competition has been an annual fixture on the official schedule ever since.

It's been 34 years since that memorable moment in our poker history. Sadly, through the years, many female champions and pioneers of the game have been forgotten.

And so, July 1, 2011 officially became "Women's Day." The WSOP rolled out the red carpet for all ladies for the first-ever Women's Parade of Poker Champions.

Prior to the start to the three-day tournament, Women in Poker Hall of Fame inductee Jan Fisher emceed a highly-anticipated parade of former female WSOP bracelet winners in front of more than a thousand other ladies in the audience who were eager to show their reverence to all those who came before them and blazed a bold new path for all women in the game, including various times in history when things were not always so easy for women in poker.

One by one, 16 former champions were introduced. Most of these gold bracelet winners had never received any public recognition before. There were a lot of smiles and cheers. There were also more than a few hugs and tears.

Vanessa Hellebuyck, the defending champion from last year's Ladies Championship was the first player introduced to the cheering audience. She was followed onto the stage by Marsha Waggoner, Vanessa Selbst, Jennifer Harman, Svetlana Gromenkova, Mary Jones, Jennifer Tilly, Cyndy Violette, Maria Stern, Linda Johnson, Susie Isaacs, Barbara Enright, Karen Wolfson, June Field and finally -- Deby Callihan, the 1980 Ladies Poker Champion.

The final portrait was the most accomplished collection of women in poker ever assembled.

## **EXCITING**

This year's [Ladies No-Limit Hold'em World Championship](#) began with 1,055 entrants. Over three days, the field was gradually reduced until players reached the money during the middle of Day Two. The top 117 finishers were paid. By the start of Day Three, only 15 players remained in contention for the world championship title.

The final table began during a late Sunday afternoon with nine players assembled around a stage that can best be described as a bandbox trying to conceal a tuba. As the number of ladies in the tournament slowly declined one-by-one, interest and excitement in the final outcome began to build.

By the time the final table was reached, the gallery of spectators was packed 10-12 deep around the rail. No one could remember a larger crowd of spectators ever assembled before for any ladies event. There were some highly unusual circumstances why this was so, which do not merit further comment. But when guest announcer and high-stakes pro Kristy Gazes began introducing the nine finalists, it was impossible to see the action due to the enormous crowd size that was close to a mob scene.

One of the nine players assembled around the final table was on the verge of immortality. Their names were as follows -- Carol Tomlinson, Valerie McColligan, Katherine Stahl, Jennifer Cowan, Genevieve Gloutnez, Peg Ledman, J. Epstein, Karina Jett and Marsha Wolak.

## **APPALLING**

Despite near-universal appreciation for what the WSOP offers to all women and the ceaseless devotion of huge numbers of extraordinary ladies who travel to Las Vegas from all over the world to play in the *Ladies Championship* each year, there were and are a few misfits.

To make things perfectly clear, no *gentlemen* participated in this year's Ladies Championship. No *gentlemen* would dare play in an event designed especially for ladies, to be played exclusively by ladies, which presumably allows one very special woman her moment to shine in front of the entire poker universe.

Sadly, some people seek to steal that beam of luminosity and seize the spotlight for themselves.

Fortunately, most people understand that when this unfortunately happens, the shining light intended for a female champion only serves to illuminate the darker side of those who just don't get it -- and probably never will.

And so it was. The WSOP had a potentially perplexing disaster averted about 90 minutes into the finale. Once the tournament played down to the final eight players, a bona fide female champion for 2011 was guaranteed.

## THRILLING

The heads-up match between [Marsha Wolak](#) and [Karina Jett](#) was a match of two *winners*. It was everything a women's poker championship should be. Alas, it was everything any WSOP should ever hope to be -- a fair competition between two fiercely competitive champions in their own right, hoping to achieve a status attainable only to a single victor.

In the end, Wolak defeated Jett. But you couldn't tell it by looking at either player. Indeed, Jett -- a woman who has paid more than her fair share of dues in this game over the last decade and who has suffered unspeakable tragedy in her personal life in the past year -- had every conceivable reason to hold her head high. Eight-months along in what will inevitably be the delivery of the youngest "player" ever to appear at a WSOP final table, Jett was standing there with a congratulatory hug and handshake for the champion, with her own beaming radiance on full display. It was *her* shining moment, as well.

Meanwhile, every last poker chip in a tournament that began three days earlier with the most accomplished women in poker history leading the charge, belonged to one special person and the new champion -- a former real estate investor-turned poker pro from Sarasota, FL, named Marsha Wolak.

Wolak collected \$192,344 in prize money for first place, but winning the gold bracelet was all that seemed to matter from the winner's reaction. Marsha Wolak is crowned as the official 2011 Ladies World Poker Champion.

Considering all the interesting and unusual things that happened at this year's Ladies Championship, perhaps one more adjective was left off the list that best describes *what this event means* for the ladies who are now its caretakers. It's *the word* that magnifies the importance of this tournament as a tradition and a magnet for what will hopefully be more women coming into poker in the future years. And, that word is.....**EVERYTHING**.

*For a comprehensive recap of Event #53, please visit the WSOP.com tournament portal page [HERE](#).*

## **EVENT #53 CHAMPION – MARSHA WOLAK**

The 2011 World Series of Poker \$1,000 buy-in Ladies No-Limit Hold'em World Championship is Marsha Wolak, from Sarasota, FL.

Wolak was born in Rock Island, IL.

Wolak earned a B.A. from the University of Arizona.

Wolak is married and has two children.

Wolak rides in an international motorcycle club called Diva Angels, which is for female motorcycle enthusiasts. The organization also raises money for several charities.

Wolak was a real estate investor for several years. She was a victim of the real estate downturn that hit Florida (and other parts of the country) starting two years ago. While exploring other options as far as what to pursue next, Wolak started to play poker more frequently. When Florida expanded legal poker to several card rooms throughout the state and raised betting limits, Wolak was able to take advantage of her dedication to the game and willingness to study and improve her game. She has been a winning player for the past two years.

This marks the third year Wolak has attended the WSOP. She had one previous cash up until this victory.

Wolak attended the WSOP Ladies Academy two years ago. She credits much of the instruction from the Academy for improving her game and enabling her to enter WSOP tournaments with more confidence.

For her victory in this tournament, Wolak collected \$192,344 for first place.

According to official records, Wolak now has 1 win, 1 final table appearance and 2 in-the-money finishes at the WSOP.

Wolak currently has \$194,249 in career WSOP winnings.

Wolak is to be classified as a professional poker player (in WSOP records and stats). She has been playing full-time for about two years.

## **WINNER INTERVIEW**

*On her feelings immediately after her victory:*

"It was so much fun. It's a dream come true. You start out thinking it would be so much fun and you dream about this.

It's really nice to say at the end of each day, 'I'm still here.' That was my goal was to make it to the end of each day."

On the third day of play and final table:

"I came in with a short stack today. But I had some luck. I also have a wonderful group of friends who are so supportive."

On this tournament not being exclusively comprised of ladies:

"Last year, I came here and I was knocked out by (player's name omitted). He was dressed up as a woman and was wearing lipstick. He was kind of making fun of us. I even had pocket aces and was all-in pre-flop against (player's name omitted), who had pocket nines. I don't have to tell you what happened. So, last year was not the best experience. I thought about not coming and not playing this year because it's not all ladies. Then, I decided that it could not have gone worse than it did last year, so I figured things could only get better."

What do you think of the WSOP gold bracelet?

"It's so beautiful!"

## **THE FINAL TABLE**

The official final table was comprised of the top nine finishers.

The final table contained no former gold bracelet winners.

Two different nations were represented at the final table – Canada (1 player) and the United States (7 players).

The runner up was popular poker pro Karina Jett, who enjoyed her best WSOP finish ever in this tournament. She collected \$119,010 in prize money for second place.

Final table play began Sunday at 3:30 p.m. Played concluded 7 hours later (playing time wise) at 9:30 p.m.

The final table was played on ESPN's secondary stage.

Action was streamed live over WSOP.com. Viewers can tune in and watch most of this year's final tables. Although hole cards are not shown, viewers can follow an overhead camera as well as a pan-shot of the table. The floor announcer provides an official account of the action.

## **OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS**

The top 117 finishers collected prize money.

No former champions cashed this year.

Tournament results are to be included in all official WSOP records.

## **ODDS AND ENDS**

This tournament attracted 1,055 entries. Attendance was up by a razor-thin margin over last year, when there were 1,054 entries.

This is the 945<sup>th</sup> gold bracelet awarded in World Series of Poker history. This figure includes every official WSOP event ever played, including tournaments during the early years when there were no actual gold bracelets awarded. It also includes the 16 gold bracelets awarded to date at WSOP Europe (2007-2010). Moreover for the first time ever, one gold bracelet was awarded for this year's winner of the WSOP Circuit National Championship.

The official WSOP gold bracelet ceremony takes place on the day following the winner's victory (or some hours later when the tournament ends very late). The ceremony takes place inside The Pavilion, which is the expansive main tournament room hosting all noon starts this year. 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 the public and media. Video and photography is permitted by both the public and members of the media.

Wolak's gold bracelet ceremony is set to take place on Tuesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>. The national anthem of the USA will be played in honor of her victory.

## **EVENT HISTORY**

The Ladies World Poker Championship has been played every year at the WSOP since 1977. This was the 34<sup>th</sup> straight

year of the competition. During the first two decades, the game played was Seven-Card Stud. In 2001, the game was changed to a mix of both Stud and Hold'em. The tournament has been a No-Limit Hold'em competition since 2005.

From 1977 through 2003, this event was traditionally played on the Mother's Day holiday. At the time, the WSOP took place during the months of April and May. Accordingly, Mother's Day Sunday was reserved for ladies. This proved to be a conflict for many ladies who wanted to compete in the event, but who also had family commitments on that day. So, the event was moved to a different day in 2004. Since 2005, the WSOP has been played during the summer months.

Only three women have won multiple Ladies Poker Championships. This elite list includes Barbara Enright, Nani Dollison and Susie Isaacs. Isaacs holds another record in this event, which will be difficult to match. She cashed five out of six years in this competition between 1991 and 1997.

Susie Isaacs has cashed more times in this event than any other player, with nine in-the-money finishes.

One of the most famous people ever to win a WSOP gold bracelet won this event in 2005 – Academy Award nominated actress Jennifer Tilly.

Previous Ladies World Poker Champions:

1977 -- Jackie McDaniels  
1978 -- Terry King  
1979 -- Barbara Freer  
1980 -- Deby Callihan  
1981 -- Ruth Godfrey  
1982 -- June Field  
1983 -- Carolyn Gardner  
1984 -- Karen Wolfson  
1985 -- Rose Pifer  
1986 -- Barbara Enright  
1987 -- Linda Ryke-Drucker  
1988 -- Loretta Huber  
1989 -- Alma McClelland  
1990 -- Marie Gabert  
1991 -- Donna Ward  
1992 -- Shari Flanzer  
1993 -- Phyllis Kessler  
1994 -- Barbara Enright  
1995 -- Starla Brodie  
1996 -- Susie Isaacs  
1997 -- Susie Isaacs  
1998 -- Mendy Commanda  
1999 -- Christina Pie  
2000 -- Nani Dollison  
2001 -- Nani Dollison  
2002 -- Catherine Brown  
2003 -- Barb Rugolo  
2004 -- Hung Doan  
2005 -- Jennifer Tilly  
2006 -- Mary Jones-Meyer  
2007 -- Sally Boyer  
2008 -- Svetlana Gromenkova  
2009 -- Lisa Hamilton  
2010 -- Vanessa Hellebuyck

## **2011 WSOP STATISTICS**

Through the conclusion of Event #53 the 2011 WSOP has attracted 60,362 combined total entries. \$110,976,060 in prize money has been awarded to winners.

With the conclusion of this weekend's tournaments, the total prize pool for all events crossed the \$100 million mark.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the breakdown of nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (33)  
Canada (5)

Ukraine (4)  
France (4)  
Great Britain (3)  
Russia (2)  
Brazil (1)  
Pakistan (1)

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

United States (29)  
Canada (5)  
Ukraine (4)  
France (4)  
Great Britain (3)  
Russia (2)  
Israel (1)  
Honduras (1)  
Indonesia (1)  
Germany (1)  
Brazil (1)  
Pakistan (1)

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the home-states of (American) winners have been:

California (6)  
New York (6)  
Nevada (5)  
Texas (3)  
Florida (2)  
Illinois (2)  
Connecticut (2)  
New Jersey (1)  
Tennessee (1)  
Indiana (1)  
Maryland (1)  
Virginia (1)  
Michigan (1)  
North Dakota (1)  
Washington (1)  
Ohio (1)

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the breakdown of professional poker players to semi-pros and amateurs who won gold bracelets has been:

Professional Players (41): Jake Cody, Cheech Barbaro, Eugene Katchalov, Allen Bari, Harrison Wilder, Matt Perrins, Sean Getzwiller, Viacheslav Zhukov, David Diaz, Andrew Badecker, Tyler Bonkowski, Brian Rast, John Juanda, Aaron Steury, Darren Woods, Jason Somerville, Bertrand Grespellier, John Monnette, Elie Payan, Mark Radoja, Chris Viox, Dan Idema, Andy Frankenberger, Chris Lee, Sam Stein, Mark Schmid, Jason Mercier, Mikhail Lakhitov, Fabrice Soulier, Mitch Schock, Matt Jarvis, Justin Pechie, Ben Lamb, Rep Porter, Andre Akkari, Joe Ebanks, Lenny Martin, Athanasios Polychronopoulos, Antonin Teisseire, Matt Matros, Marsha Wolak

Semi-Pros (5): Sean R. Drake, Amir Lehavot, Oleksii Kovalchuk, Eric Rosawig, Arkadiy Tsinis

Amateurs (7): Geoffrey Klein, Foster Hays, James Hess, Kirk Caldwell, Ken Griffin, Owais Ahmed, David Singontiko

Since tracking first started in 2005, this year's WSOP has the greatest disparity of professionals winning over semi-pros and amateurs than any year recorded, so far – with 46 out of 53 events being won by pros or semi-pros.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the victories of 11 of the 52 winners (21 percent) marked the first time the new champion had ever cashed at the WSOP.

Every WSOP held over the past 11 years has included at least one multiple gold bracelet champion (meaning two or more wins within the same year). The last year the WSOP was comprised exclusively of single-event winners was back in 1999. The record for most multiple gold bracelet winners within a single year was in 2009, when five players managed to win two or more titles. So far this year, no player has yet won two gold bracelets.

The streak of consecutive male WSOP gold bracelet winners is currently at 209 consecutive events. Aside from the annual Ladies Poker Championship, the last female player to win a WSOP tournament open to both sexes was Vanessa Selbst, in 2008. The longest "cold" streak for female players occurred between years 1982 and 1996, when 221 consecutive open events passed without a female champion.

The highest finish by any female (open events) at this year's WSOP was by two players. Maria Ho finished second (\$5,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em). Kim Nguyen also finished as the runner up (\$1,500 buy-in Six-Handed Limit Hold'em).

The highest finish by any defending champion at this year's WSOP was by David Baker, who after winning the previous \$10,000 buy-in No-Limit Deuce-to-Seven Draw Lowball World Championship finished in sixth place in defense of his title.

Reigning world poker champions rarely perform well the following year after their victory. Chris "Jesus" Ferguson was the last world champion to win a gold bracelet the next year, which happened in 2001. Perhaps it's due to the increasing size of the fields. But there's also great pressure on the champions to do well. What follows is a list of the only world champions in history to win a gold bracelet after winning the championship during the previous year:

Johnny Moss (1975)  
Doyle Brunson (1977)  
Bobby Baldwin (1979)  
Stu Ungar (1981)  
Johnny Chan (1988)  
Hamid Dastmalchi (1993)  
Chris "Jesus" Ferguson (2001)

By contrast, players who make it to the final table of the Main Event Championship (November Nine) one year tend to do quite well in subsequent WSOP years. Consider that last year, three former Main Event finalists won gold bracelets – Eric Buchman, Tex Barch, and Scott Montgomery. This year, Matt Jarvis won his first gold bracelet one year after making it to the November Nine in 2010.

#### **New tournament records set at the 2011 WSOP (to date):**

Biggest Heads-Up tournament prize pool in history (\$3,040,000) – Event #2  
Largest live Omaha High-Low Split Tournament in history (925 entries) – Event #3  
Largest live Six-Handed tournament in poker history (1,920 entries) – Event #10  
Biggest Deuce-to-Seven tournament prize pool in history (\$1,184,400) – Event #16  
Largest live \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament in history with single day start (3157 entries) – Event #18  
Largest live \$1,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament in history with single day start (3175 entries) – Event #20  
Largest consecutive-days starting field sizes in poker history (combined 6,332 entries) – Event #18 and Event #20  
Largest live Pot-Limit Omaha tournament in poker history (1,071 entries) – Event #22  
Largest Mixed-Game (Eight-Game Mix) in poker history (489 entries) – Event #23  
Largest Seniors tournament in poker history (3,752 entries) – Event #30  
Biggest Seniors No-Limit Hold'em championship prize pool in history (\$3,376,800) – Event #30  
Largest single-day live tournament start in poker history (3,752 entries) – Event #30  
Largest consecutive-days starting field sizes in poker history (combined 6,580 entries) – Event #30/Event #32 (broke Event #18/Event #20 record from earlier in 2011 WSOP)  
Largest four-consecutive days field sizes in poker history (2,500+3,752+2,828+3,144 =12,224 entries) -- Events 28, 30, 32, 34, June 16-19, 2011  
Largest Mixed Pot-Limit tournament in history (606 entries) – Event #39  
Biggest Pot-Limit Omaha prize pool in live poker history (\$3,393,400) – Event #42

#### **New player records set at the 2011 WSOP (to date):**

The 35-year span between Artie Cobb's first cash in this event (1976) and most recent cash in the same event (2011) represents the longest time span in WSOP history. He accomplished this in Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split (Event #25).

Phil Hellmuth Jr. added to his record as the individual all-time leader in cashes (83) and final table appearances (42). Howard "Tahoe" Andrew added to his record as the player with the longest consecutive streak of WSOP appearances (entering at least one event), currently at 38 years and counting (1974 to present).

#### **RAISING AWARENESS: BAD BEAT ON CANCER AND THE WSOP**

Bad Beat on Cancer was created in 2003 by Phil Gordon and Rafe Furst as an easy and fun way for poker players to donate to the Prevent Cancer Foundation. It all began when Chris MoneyMaker pledged 1 percent of his 2003 Main

Event winnings and went on to capture the championship, contributing \$25,000 when he was awarded the \$2,500,000 first- place prize. By taking the pledge, wearing the patch, and joining 'Team 1%', players can feel good supporting a cause that only benefits when they win. As the official charity of the WSOP, pledges simply indicate to the payouts staff that they are donating 1 percent of their winnings, and the funds are automatically withheld. A tax receipt is generated and sent to their mailing address. Several high profile professionals have made 'life pledges' of 1 percent of all their winnings -- including Annie Duke, Phil Hellmuth Jr., Lee Childs, Paul Wasicka, Andy Bloch, Dennis Phillips, and others. Since 2003, the initiative has raised over \$3,500,000 for cancer prevention research, education, and community outreach programs. Players can pick up a patch and join Team 1% by stopping by the Bad Beat on Cancer booth, located at the 2011 WSOP opposite the Amazon Room in the concourse. The Nevada Cancer Institute based in Las Vegas is a benefiting charity from the Bad Beat on Cancer.

*Note: Various categories and statistics will be updated with each gold bracelet event as they are completed.*

*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)*

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