



**2007-2008 World Series of Poker Circuit
Winter Bayou Poker Challenge
Harrah's New Orleans
Official Report**

**Event #10
No-Limit Hold'em Championship Event
Buy-In: \$5,000 (+150)
Number of Entries: 160
Total Prize Money: \$765,000
December 5, 2007**

Final Results:

1 st	Andy Philachack	Garland, TX	\$247,860
2 nd	Josh Arieh	Atlanta, GA	130,050
3 rd	Ted McCollom, Jr.	Seabrook, TX	76,500
4 th	David Fox	Coram, NY	61,200
T-5 th	Nic "the Greek" Gellepis	Tallahassee, FL	42,075
T-5 th	Lenny Pruzansky	Richmond, TX	42,075
7 th	Bruce F. MacGregor	Port Orange, FL	30,600
8 th	Philip Sparta	Fairfax, VA	22,950
9 th	Lou Esposito	Howard Beach, NY	15,300
10 th	Carl Johnson	Georgetown, TX	12,240
11 th	Clinton J. McCollom	Seabrook, TX	12,240
12 th	Joel Font	Orlando, FL	12,240
13 th	Kenny Milam	La Place, LA	10,710
14 th	Will "the Thrill" Futhy	NA	10,710
15 th	Robert Niehay	Lake Jackson, TX	10,710
16 th	Larry Satterwhite	Houston, TX	9,180
17 th	Tim Debenport	Baton Rouge, LA	9,180
18 th	Rodney Shows	Hattiesburg, MS	9,180

Playing for First

After Two Crushing Second-Place Finishes, Andy Philachack Finally Earns His Breakthrough Victory at Winter Bayou Poker Challenge

Two-time WSOP gold bracelet winner Josh Arieh is the runner-up at Harrah's New Orleans

New Orleans, LA (December 5, 2007) – There's an old saying that no one remembers who finishes second. Andy Philachack learned that lesson the hard way. Twice. Back in 2005, the 33-year-old Dallas chiropractor took second place at the World Poker Open. Earlier this year, he followed up that mixed blessing with yet another second-place showing, on a day when poker history was re-written by one of poker's most famous superstars. Philachack was the runner up in Event #15 at the 2007 World Series of Poker, which just so happened to be the tournament domino that knocked Phil Hellmuth, Jr. into a class all his own, as the combustible poker icon iced away his record-11th WSOP victory.

The memory of being ignored and instantly forgotten by pretty much the entire poker world was tempered by a second-place payout from that event totaling \$394,594. As satisfying as collecting a big tournament payout may seem to the average poker player, true champions measure themselves not on the basis in-the-money finishes or final table appearances, but of victories won.

In July, Philachack returned to his home in the Dallas suburb of Garland inspired by his performance at the World Series of Poker, but less than satisfied with the end results. He vowed to make significant improvements to his game. So, Philachack enlisted the counsel of a highly-respected tournament player from Dallas named Kido Pham. When the 2007-08 World Series of Poker Circuit schedule rolled around, both Philachack and Pham made plans to attend the fourth stop on the series schedule, to be held at Harrah's New Orleans. Fast forward to December 5, 2007: Andy Philachack became a poker champion.

"I was playing for first place all the way," said Andy Philachack just moments after winning his first major tournament victory in the championship event at the 2007 Winter Bayou Poker Challenge. "I had no other goal but first place in this tournament."

Philachack's pre-tournament confidence might have seemed overly optimistic, perhaps even preposterous, considering his dismal chip position at the start of what would later become an intense final table. He arrived among the final nine players ranked eighth in chips. He was outchipped by the leader by a 17 to 1 margin. Indeed, had Philachack been in the hospital, he would have been strapped on life support in intensive care. Then again, miraculous recoveries do sometimes happen.

This marked the fourth occasion that the World Series of Poker Circuit had come to Harrah's New Orleans. After sizable turnouts in each of the first three years, the 2007-2008 WSOP Circuit season features two stops in the Crescent City. This Winter Bayou Poker Challenge attracted over 2,200 poker players and paid out over \$2 million in total prize money. Harrah's New Orleans will play host to a similar series of events, planned on May 9-21, 2008.

The \$5,000 championship event began on December 3rd and was played over a three-day time frame. Three former WSOP gold bracelet winners entered the main event, including Josh Arieh, Brandon Cantu, and Dan Schmiech. In addition, the last two Harrah's New Orleans poker champions, Walter Chambers and Louie Esposito, entered the main event. The runner-up from the first-ever WSOP Europe championship (held in September) also participated as John Tabatabai, a British poker player based in London made the overseas trip.

"This was my first trip ever to New Orleans," said Tabatabai. "I had never been to the (American) south before and I always wanted to come here. There is so much culture here and fun things to do in New Orleans. The poker action is incredible here, too. I've never seen such great poker action."

Unfortunately for Tabatabai and many others, an in-the-money finish was not in the cards. Of the 160 entries paid into the main event, the first day dealt out 110 eliminations. Day two busted 41 more players, eight of whom finished in the money. That left nine finalists to compete for the championship and first place money totaling nearly a quarter of a million dollars.

When day three began, two-time WSOP gold bracelet winner Josh Arieh arrived with a significant chip advantage. In fact, many observers were already whispering that Arieh, an experienced poker pro from Atlanta, was nearly unbeatable given his dominance throughout the three-day tournament. He had the chip lead, by a wide margin at times, from what seemed to be the very first hour of play. David Fox arrived in second place, with the remainder of the field desperately in need of an early rush of favorable cards. Among them was the defending champion -- Lou Esposito, a 32-year-old professional poker player from Howard Beach, NY. He took first place and \$516,000 at the previous Bayou Poker Challenge, held last

May. However, Esposito had a much bigger mountain to climb on this occasion, as he sat down dead last in chips when play commenced on the main stage of the Harrah's New Orleans Theatre.

Then, there was the man in baseball cap in the number six seat, so seemingly out of place among rivals, with a relatively paltry 35,000 in his stack. It took exactly five hours for Philachack to pull off a stunning upset, thus earning a deeply satisfying emotional and financial victory. With coverage provided by Bluff Media and video coverage streamed over the Internet at the official World Series of Poker website, seating positions and starting chip counts at the final table began as follows:

SEAT 1:	Ted McCollom, Jr.	252,500
SEAT 2:	Philip Sparta	85,500
SEAT 3:	Lou Esposito	20,500
SEAT 4:	Bruce F. MacGregor	123,500
SEAT 5:	Nic "the Greek" Gellepis	65,000
SEAT 6:	Andy Philachack	35,000
SEAT 7:	Lenny Pruzansky	174,000
SEAT 8:	David Fox	324,000
SEAT 9:	Josh Arieh	510,000

9th Place – Play was fast from the opening deal. Just five minutes into play, Lou Esposito was desperately low on chips. He was forced to play a weak hand as the blinds and antes gobbled away at his stack. Esposito tried to steal the blinds from the button holding 7-5 suited. He lost the key hand and thus made an uncharacteristic early exit. The 2007 Bayou Poker champion collected \$15,300 for ninth place as the crowd gave the departed a standing ovation.

8th Place – Moments later, Philip Sparta went out. He moved all-in with A-Q. His 57,000 raise was called by Lenny Pruzansky, holding pocket threes. The classic "race" (two overcards versus an underpair) was won by Pruzansky as neither an ace nor a queen fell. Philip Sparta, who was the youngest player at the final table, ended up as the eighth-place finisher. The 23-year-old poker pro from Northern Virginia received \$22,950.

Before the next elimination, a critical hand took place that may have seemed somewhat inconsequential at the time. Andy Philachack, getting low on chips, moved all-in holding 10-10. He was called instantly by Ted McCollom, who showed A-A. Just when it looked like Philachack would be the next player to bust out, a miracle ten rained down on the river, snatching Philachack away from the jaws of defeat. Little did anyone know at the time what a huge hand that would turn out to be.

7th Place – Bruce F. MacGregor went out next when he moved all-in for \$80,000 holding A-Q. Ted McCollom made another call with a small pair, this time showing pocket sixes. Once again, the little pair held up and McCollom increased his stack to over 300,000 while Bruce F. MacGregor exited his seat and walked off the stage. The former Vietnam veteran and land developer from Port Orange, FL earned \$30,600 in prize money.

5th Place – Play continued for nearly ninety minutes before the next player was eliminated. One of the most exciting hands of the tournament occurred when Nic “the Greek” Gellepis moved all-in (with A-J suited). Lenny Pruzansky had just enough chips to make the call (with J-J). That left Josh Arieh with a tough decision, holding 9-9. Arieh decided to make the difficult call and tabled his underpair. He was delighted to see the flop come 10-9-3, good for trip nines. However, two spades also flopped, giving Gellepis a flush draw. With two players on the verge of elimination, the crowd surged forward towards the final table. The turn card dashed all suspense for players and spectators alike as a fourth nine gave Arieh quad-nines, and the biggest pot of the tournament up to that point.

Oddly enough, both of the eliminated players had identical stack sizes on the bust out hand, a very rare occurrence in tournament poker. Hence, the two players split up the combined prize money of 5th and 6th places – leaving \$42,075 for each player. Nic “the Greek” Gellepis officially tied for fifth place. The 30-year-old real estate investor from Tallahassee, FL had been down all the way to only 400 in tournament chips at one point -- when antes were 200 and the blinds were at 800-1600. He not only survived, but cashed out for a nice score.

5th Place – Also taking fifth place was Lenny Pruzansky, from Richmond, TX. The 59-year-old CEO of LTD Financial Services took home \$42,075 to add to his investment portfolio.

4th Place – David Fox appeared to be the greatest threat to Josh Arieh during much of the second and third day. However, he lost some momentum late in the tournament leaving him low in chips and then lost a race with 6-6 against Andy Philachack’s A-K. With his last 125,000 committed to the pot, Fox could not outfox his final foe as Philachack caught an ace on the river, eliminating the 31-year-old New York poker pro from the tournament. David Fox’s payout amounted to \$61,200.

3rd Place – Philachack has seized the chip lead by this point, by virtue of knocking out Fox and doubling up against Ted McCollom on a critical hand.