

The Second Annual

JACK BINION

WORLD POKER OPEN



Event #1 **Omaha (Pot Limit) \$500** **3/26/01**
Entries: 152 Rebuys: 217 **Total Prize Money: \$178,965**

1st	Robert Willis	Grenada, MS	\$71,586
2nd	Robert "Ely" Smith	Evansville, IN	35,793
3rd	Phillip Ivey	Atlantic City, NJ	17,897
4th	Michael Schneider	Oxford, GA	10,738
5th	Randy Edmonson	Columbus, MS	8,053
6th	Jim Lester	Cincinnati, OH	6,264
7th	Richard Tatalovich	Scottsdale, AZ	4,474
8th	Brent Carter	Oak Park, IL	3,579
9th	Jerry Clay	Sherwood, AR	2,863
10th	Bob Beck	Slidell, LA	2,148
11th	Roger Guerrette	Houston, TX	2,148
12th	Nick Graphia*	Baton Rouge, LA	2,058
12th	Don Delancy*	Miami, FL	2,058
14th	Jim Sears	Merrit Island, FL	1,968
15th	John Bolten	Overland Park, KS	1,968
16th	Jim Karabinas	Park Ridge, IL	1,790
17th	Lamar Hampton	Casselberry, FL	1,790
18th	Dale Witherspoon	Aubrey, TX	1,790

* Tie

Win a seat in the \$5,000 Championship
 No-Limit Hold'em Event for \$120.
 Super Satellites begin nightly at 8 p.m.

Iram it and jam it the whole time — that's the way I play," said Robert Willis, whose aggressive style enabled him to ultimately defeat 151 opponents and capture first place in the inaugural event of the second annual Jack Binion World Poker Open. His victory in the \$500 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha competition — incidentally the first poker tournament he has ever entered — brought Willis \$71,586 in prize money, plus a WPO gold and diamond bracelet.

A 44-year-old consulting civil engineer and an avid blackjack player, Willis has also played poker since childhood and regularly takes a seat in the local Hold'em and Pot-Limit Omaha cash games. "I just played the side games during last year's tournament, but decided to enter an event this year," he commented. "I've got to admit, it was great fun."

Willis came to the final table in middle chip position and wasted no time in pumping up his stack, eliminating several of his opponents in the process. One of the few to escape his onslaught was Jerry Clay, who was low on dough from the outset and met a quick demise when he raised all in before the flop with Q-Q-10-2 against Richard Tatalovich, who called from the big blind with Q-9-4-2. The fourth-street board showed A-7-4/2, and when Clay failed to catch on the river, he was gone in ninth place for \$2,863.

Next out was tournament veteran Brent Carter, who fired his last volley when he raised before the flop with A-K-10-4 and

(Continued on back)

Event #1 • Pot-Limit Omaha

FINAL TABLE Player & Chip Position

Seat No.	Player	Chip Position
Seat No. 1	Jim Lester	\$10,500
Seat No. 2	Michael Schneider	\$14,500
Seat No. 3	Phillip Ivey	\$28,500
Seat No. 4	Robert "Ely" Smith	\$40,500
Seat No. 5	Richard Tatalovich	\$31,000
Seat No. 6	Brent Carter	\$15,000
Seat No. 7	Robert Willis	\$25,500
Seat No. 8	Randy Edmonson	\$17,000
Seat No. 9	Jerry Clay	\$4,000

TOTAL PRIZE MONEY
\$178,965

was challenged by Robert Willis, who held A-5-5-4. The flop came 10-5-2, and when another deuce fell on the turn, Carter was drawing dead and bit the dust in eighth place for \$3,579.

After forfeiting two big pots in a row to Willis, reigning U.S. Poker Champion Richard Tatalovich found himself close to the green and soon made his final stand when he raised before the flop with K-Q-J-J. Willis called with 10-9-8-8, and the flop came 9-9-6. Tatalovich bet all in, but he got no help on board and was sent home with seventh place and \$4,474.

Two hands later, Willis took out Jim Lester, who had survived several all-in battles before finally succumbing when he raised before the flop with Q-J-10-9. Willis called with A-9-8-3 and the flop came A-8-2, giving him top two. Lester bet all in, but when no miracle arrived to save him, he was forced to exit in sixth place for \$6,264. A 40-year-old building contractor, Lester won the \$1,000 buy-in Seven-Card Stud event in the 2000 WPO.

After nursing a short stack throughout most of the final-table play, Randy Edmonson lost it all when he took K-8-5-3 up against Phillip Ivey, who raised before the flop with A♠ K♠ Q♣ 2♣. When the flop came K♣ Q♠ 5♣, Edmonson bet all in. But Ivey was in the lead, then caught runner-runner spades to claim the pot, leaving Edmonson washed up in fifth place for \$8,053.

Also meeting his demise at the hands of Ivey was Michael Schneider, who made his final effort with K-Q-10-7, calling all in on a flop of J-10-6. But Ivey held A-J-6-5, and when babies fell on board, Schneider finished fourth for \$10,738. The 34-year-old owner of several self-serve car washes, Schneider was playing not only his first tournament ever, but his first Omaha high game as well. He and his wife are expecting twins in June.

Ivey was knocked out a few hands later when he took A-Q-5-5 up against Robert Willis, who held Q-10-8-6. The flop came A-7-5, giving Ivey a set, but Willis turned a nine for a straight. When the board failed to pair on the river, Ivey had to settle for

third place and \$17,897. A 24-year-old poker pro and formidable competitor — "a really tough player to eliminate," said Willis — Ivey captured a Limit Hold'em title in last year's WPO and has blazed through the tournament trail ever since.

When heads-up play began, Willis held almost a 2-to-1 advantage over runner-up Robert "Ely" Smith, who had arrived for the final showdown as the undisputed chip leader. It was all over only a few deals later when Smith raised before the flop with A♥ A♣ Q♦ 4♣ and Willis called with 9-6-6-5. The flop came 10♦ 8♣ 6♣, Willis bet out, and Smith raised all in. Willis called and spiked an eight on the turn, claiming the pot and his first major tournament title with a full house.

"You can't get much tougher than him, but I took my best shot," said Smith, who received \$35,793 for his second-place finish. A 57-year-old airline transport pilot, he also was playing in his first major poker competition. "I really enjoyed it — it was a great experience," he commented.♠