

WSOP: Bracelet Winner Q and A – Eric Brooks

Eric Brooks Wins his First Gold Bracelet and Donates All of His Prize Money to Charity

Eric Brooks entered the USD 10,000 seven-card stud world championship because he wanted to play the best players in the world at the World Series of Poker. He got his wish when he faced off with the likes of Phil Ivey and Daniel Negreanu as action played down to the final table late on day 2 of the tournament. The tough competition continued at the final table, where he eventually rose to the top against David Oppenheim, Minh Ly, Erik Seidel, and third-place finisher, Alex Kostritsyn. Card Player caught up with Brooks after the final table at a press conference. He talked about the tournament and the players he faced, but most importantly he talked about a decision he made before the first card got into the air three days ago. Brooks decided to donate 100 percent of his tournament winnings (USD 415,856) to charity. The charity he is making this generous donation to is the Decision Education Foundation. Brooks is a board member for this non-profit organization, as is Annie Duke. Read what Brooks has to say about their important cause below.

Question: What inspired you to play this event? Do you have much experience at the World Series of Poker?

Eric Brooks: I've played more in the side games than in the tournaments. I've played in it only a few times, but that was back in 1979.

Q: Have you always played seven-card stud as your poker game of choice? What inspired you to buy-in to this USD 10,000 world championship event?

EB: Stud is the game that I've probably played the most

of...there was a lot of great players and it's very challenging and a lot fun. I love to play and this is certainly a great challenge.

Q: Did any of the great players in this tournament really worry you?

EB: All of the players that have been successful before, winning tournaments, and have that experience you're certainly concerned about, but in the end the reality is that there is an awful lot of luck involved. Somebody who doesn't play as well, or make as good of decisions can get lucky. It is part of the reason that poker is such an appealing game that basically anybody can win at any time. Hopefully I made good decisions, I certainly tried, but no matter what I had good outcomes.

Q: A lot of players donate to charity, but you are donating 100 percent of your winnings. What inspired you to give such a gracious contribution? Tell us a little bit about the charity you chose to give that to?

EB: The charity is called the Decision Education Foundation, and it's based in Palo Alto. I'm on the board, and Annie Duke is actually on the board now as well. I invited her about a year ago. Essentially what we do is we work with schools and with teachers, teaching the science of decision making. This is something that since the late 1960's and early 70's has been taught at a university level. We don't see any reason kids in grades K-12 shouldn't be offered the opportunity to learn as well, so we're working with schools to integrate the science of decision making, and decision analytics so that kids can grow up to be really good decision makers whether they're playing poker or deciding what it is that they want to do with their life. Or trying to decide if they're going to drop out of school, or if they're going to use drugs, so there is a lot of great application for what we're doing, and this money is going to go a long way towards helping them. I would

invite everyone to learn more about it:
<http://www.decisioneducation.org/>

Q: Tell me about the second big hand you had against Alexander Kostritsyn. What did you think he had there?

EB: He had the best hand, and I made hidden kings and queens, and I believe he had three hidden nines. We both hit on fifth street and we put a bunch of bets in. I had the worst of it for sure, and then on sixth street I made the full house. I didn't realize that he had three nines, he may have filled up I don't even know. Then I check-raised on the end thinking that if I bet out I wouldn't get raised, because after putting out that many bets it would look like I was full because it looked like he was drawing to a straight or a flush. So it would have been suspicious if I bet out, maybe it could have gotten to three bets if I led out and he chose to raise me, but I chose to check-raise instead

Q: What did you think about Alex Kostritsyn as a player?

EB: I think he is a very good player. He plays very fast, very aggressive, and if you're not making hands against him it would be extremely difficult to fade such an aggressive player. I also think he is an incredibly nice guy.

Q: What does the rest of the 2008 WSOP hold in store for you? Are you going to play in any other events?

EB: No I don't have any plans to play in any other events. I am heading to Oregon for my father's 85th birthday, and then heading back to work after that.