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Champion Jamie Gold sits in front of his \$12 million in winnings from the World Series of Poker. "I was playing some great poker," he said.

## \$12 million glitters for poker champion Gold

Ex-agent cashes in at World Series of Poker; Texan comes in sixth

By Ryan Nakashima

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LAS VEGAS — When Jamie Gold bluffed, his opponents folded. When he had the best hand, they threw in all their chips.

With a run of cards, a huge chip stack and an uncanny knack for reading other players, Gold, a talkative former Hollywood talent agent, cajoled his way to victory Friday at the World Series of Poker for the \$12 million grand prize.

"I was just lucky sometimes, and sometimes I outplayed people," said Gold, a 36-year-old Malibu, Calif., resident. "I just feel really fortunate. I was playing some great poker. The best poker of my life."

The 12-day marathon that began with a record field of 8,773 players ended with the flourish that Gold made his trademark. With 3.9 million in chips in the pot, Gold declared "all in" and stood beside the pile of cash at the table to convince the last remaining player, Paul Wasicka, it was his for the taking.

"I knew that he was weak, but he had a hand. And then I knew it was my chance," said Gold, whose clients have included Jimmy Fallon and Lucy Liu. "I

went all in, and then I just went into my act."

Wasicka, a 25-year-old former restaurant manager from Westminster, Colo., had seen it before. Earlier, Gold took down a 3 million pot from him and sixth-place finisher Richard Lee of San Antonio by bluffing while holding only an unsuited two and three.

On the final hand, Wasicka held pocket 10s — or two 10s as hole cards — with a board of queen, eight, five. Wasicka said later he thought Gold was drawing to a straight. Instead Gold had a queen and nine, for a better pair, when the turn revealed an ace and the final, or river card was a four.

"He did a really good job tricking me on the last hand," Wasicka said. "I felt like based on the previous half hour he was in a gambling mood. My gut just told me to go for it, and I just went for it and I was wrong."

Still, second-place earned Wasicka \$6.1 million.

The nine players at the final table were guaranteed at least \$1.5 million in winnings when they sat down around 2 p.m. Thursday. Thirteen hours of no-limit Texas Hold 'em later, Gold and Wasicka were the last two players left.

Gold eliminated six of the previous seven players himself, and his 79 million in chips covered a good corner. With 11.2 million in chips, Wasicka was badly overmatched.