

= Darwin Moon =

Darvin Moon (born October 1 , 1963) is an American self @-@ employed logger and amateur poker player who was the runner @-@ up of the 2009 World Series of Poker (WSOP) US \$ 10 @,@ 000 no @-@ limit Texas hold 'em main event . It was his first time playing in the World Series of Poker . Moon , who taught himself how to play poker , ran a small logging company in the Maryland Panhandle before earning a 2009 World Series seat by winning a \$ 130 satellite tournament .

Moon earned the chip lead early in the tournament , and eventually entered the final table as the chip leader , with about 30 percent of the chips in play . Although Moon briefly lost the lead , he eventually regained it after eliminating veteran players like Steve Begleiter and Phil Ivey . Moon ultimately lost heads up against Joe Cada , earning Moon US \$ 5 @.@ 18 million for his second @-@ place finish .

Although some criticized his playing style and lack of experience , Moon was also praised for his working stiff personality and self @-@ deprecating manner . Moon participated in the 2010 National Heads @-@ Up Poker Championship , but lost in the second round to Annie Duke . He also competed in the 2010 World Series of Poker main event , but was eliminated on the second day .

= = Early life = =

Darvin Moon lives in the western Maryland town of Oakland , at the foot of Backbone Mountain . Prior to entering the World Series of Poker , Moon lived in a 14 by 70 feet (4 @.@ 3 by 21 @.@ 3 m) trailer with his wife , Wendy . Moon owns and operates a small logging company with other family members . Most of his days were spent in pine forests scattered throughout the Maryland Panhandle . Moon taught himself how to play poker , and he first started playing with his grandfather at a young age . He started playing frequently around 2006 and studied the game by watching televised poker . Moon regularly played home games at such places as fire departments , Elks Lodges and American Legion buildings .

= = 2009 WSOP = =

Darvin Moon earned his seat in the 2009 World Series of Poker no @-@ limit Texas hold 'em main event by winning a \$ 130 satellite tournament at the Wheeling Island Casino in Wheeling , West Virginia . He lost two Wheeling Island tournaments before finishing in first place on his third attempt , winning a \$ 10 @,@ 000 main event seat and \$ 6 @,@ 000 for expenses . The event marked Moon ? s first time playing in the WSOP , as well as visiting Las Vegas , Nevada and riding in a commercial plane . Due to the poor economy 's impact on the logging business , Moon considered keeping the \$ 10 @,@ 000 instead of entering the tournament , but decided to play after visiting the Rio All Suite Hotel and Casino and watching World Series games there .

On the first day of the tournament , Moon was dealt pocket aces six times and got three @-@ of @-@ a @-@ kind on the flop three times . He performed well on the first day and continued a successful streak throughout the tournament , although he himself proclaimed it was luck . He eliminated several professional poker players during the tournament , including David Benyamine . He eventually obtained the chip lead and kept it until the seventh day of play . At that time he fell to tenth place , but won a few big hands to recover and ended the day back in the lead . He eliminated Billy Kopp in one of the biggest hands in the tournament when his Q ? J ? led to a higher flush than Kopp 's 5 ? 3 ? . Moon entered the final table as the chip leader , holding 58 @.@ 6 million chips , or about 30 percent of the chips in play .

During the final table , Moon eliminated Steve Begleiter and seasoned pro Phil Ivey . In both cases , Moon was behind but caught cards to win ; Ivey lost with A @-@ K to Moon 's A @-@ Q when a queen came up on the flop , and Begleiter 's pocket queens lost to Moon 's A @-@ Q when he caught an ace on the river . Moon lost the chip lead during the November Nine game , but his knockout win against Begleiter brought him back into the chip lead with 63 @.@ 9 million chips . He

made it to the final two players and went heads up against Joe Cada , with Moon at 58 @. @ 85 million and Cada at 135 @. @ 95 million . Moon briefly recovered the chip lead from Cada , but lost it during the 79th heads @-@ up hand , where Cada bet 3 million chips with his J @-@ 9 on a 10 @-@ 5 @-@ 9 @-@ 10 turn after the flop was checked , Moon check @-@ raised all in with 8 @-@ 7 . Cada called with his remaining 58 million chips , won the hand and regained the chip lead and the momentum for the duration of the match .

Commentators later criticized Moon for making such an expensive bluff for a small pot , and Moon seemed visibly disappointed after the game . Storms Reback , of All In Magazine , said the hand was a crucial moment for Moon , and that his fatigue from it may have resulted in a bad call at the final hand of the tournament . After 18 hours of play , Moon ended up finishing second against Cada when his Q ? J ? succumbed to Cada 's 9 ? 9 ? . He won \$ 5 @, @ 182 @, @ 601 for his second @-@ place finish .

After the tournament ended , Moon was congratulated by professional poker player Phil Hellmuth , who said , " I 'm proud of you , Darwin . " Some were critical of both Moon and Cada . Mike Matusow , a professional poker player with a reputation for trash @-@ talking , called the heads @-@ up contest between the two " a new low for poker as a skilled game " . Storms Reback , of All In Magazine , said Moon was " out of his league " at the tournament , and made a number of questionable calls and bets . As an example , Reback cited a hand in which Moon attempted to bluff by re @-@ raising a bet by Begleiter for 15 million chips , then folding when Begleiter went all in for an additional 6 million , even though Moon was getting better than 7 @-@ to @-@ 1 odds on his money . Moon said he planned to spend some of his World Series winnings on putting relatives through college and charitable contributions to his home town , including a new youth ball field and recreation center . Moon said of his victory , " We ain 't gonna change . The next time you see us , we 'll be wearing jeans and everything else , like we always have . "

= = Post @-@ WSOP poker career = =

Moon played few major poker games since the 2009 World Series of Poker , preferring instead to play local games among friends in the Oakland area . When asked how he had done in those games , Moon replied , " I 've done all right . I 've held my own . " Moon joined 63 other players in the 2010 National Heads @-@ Up Poker Championship at the Caesars Palace in Las Vegas . He paid the \$ 20 @, @ 000 buy @-@ in from his personal funds . Moon was paired against online qualifier William Huntress in the first round of the tournament on March 5 . ESPN writer Gary Wise said Huntress stood " as good a chance of toppling an invited player as any qualifier ever has " , and questioned why Moon participated in the tournament given Moon 's past claims of disinterest in media exposure and sponsorship . However , PokerNews.com writer Mickey Doft predicted Moon would do well in the tournament due to his unpredictable play . Moon defeated Huntress when his K ? 10 ? held out against Huntress ' J ? 8 ? . The flop was A ? Q ? 4 ? , giving Huntress the better draw , but Moon won with king @-@ high when another club failed to come on the turn or river , advancing Moon to the second round . He lost in that round to Annie Duke , whose three Kings bested Moon 's two pair of Queens and Tens . Duke went on to win the tournament .

In August 2010 , Moon joined Chris MoneyMaker and Jonathan Duhamel in hosting the Mega Stack Series XVII , a live poker tournament at Foxwoods Resort Casino that drew 2 @, @ 200 participants and had a total prize pool of more than \$ 1 million . The next month , Moon entered the 2010 World Series of Poker no @-@ limit Texas hold @-@ em main event . Early in the tournament , Moon doubled up with pocket kings against a player with pocket jacks . He was eliminated on day two , however , after moving all in with 10 ? 9 ? on a 9 ? 4 ? 2 ? flop . His opponent had pocket aces , and Moon received no help with a K ? turn and 5 ? river . Leaving the poker room , he said to his wife , " At least the pressure 's off , honey . "

In 2011 , Moon accepted a deal to become Tour Ambassador for Heartland Poker Tour , wearing the patch of the nationally @-@ televised tour and playing in several HPT events . HPT President Todd Anderson of Moon : " Darwin is our kind of guy . He 's worked hard his entire life and now lives the dream that attracts so many to the game . " Moon became a fan favorite among HPT 's tour

regulars when he declined an invitation for the November Nine taping in 2010 to play an HPT stop in Iowa . A last minute replacement for an ill Scotty Nguyen , Moon bonded with HPT ? s crew and players . Moon said , " I 'm very comfortable with the HPT folks . They 're like family . "

= = Personality and style = =

Moon displayed what he described as a humble and self @-@ deprecating manner during the World Series of Poker , repeatedly acknowledging his lack of poker experience throughout the tournament , and often attributing his success to luck and a high number of strong cards , rather than talent . Moon adopted a phrase , " If I win , I win . If I lose , I lose , " which reflected his casual approach to the game . Moon also said one of his philosophies was , " Make the other guy pay to see the cards " , a strategy attributed to many re @-@ raises Moon made during the 2009 WSOP despite weak hands . Moon had almost no experience in heads @-@ up poker , which some commentators said factored into his loss against Cada in the final hours of the 2009 World Series . Many fans and commentators praised his working stiff style , with some dubbing him " Darwin Gump " , a reference to the underdog protagonist of the 1994 drama film , Forrest Gump . Moon has also been nicknamed the " Luddite Logger " because of his distaste for anything technological , including credit cards and online poker . Moon refused to sign a sponsorship deal with an Internet poker company during the 2009 tournament because he said he did not want to answer to anybody . Moon wore a New Orleans Saints hat throughout the tournament because , " I like cheering for the underdog . " Moon was invited to guest at the Saints games for their entire playoff run , and watched them win Super Bowl XLIV against the Indianapolis Colts in Miami .