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# **The WSOP Appears To Be Thriving, But Look Below The Surface**

The World Series Of Poker had another record breaking year and remains the industry standard, In 2011, there is a record 75,672 entries in comparison to last year's record of 72,966. This year is up three.7 percent of last year. Also, the prize pool set a record in this year with a whopping \$191,999,010 dollars compared to last year's high of \$187,109,850. This was a slight increase of 2.6 percent. Those numbers make you think all is fine in the poker world.

By looking deeper you can see most predictions of the turn out this year were deeply understated. The truth is they broke records as outlined above. So Black Friday did not have the impact some thought it would. Despite thousands of players angry after three of the four sites failed to reimburse them even after the government cleared the way to do so. Many thought players might not be able to afford WSOP buy-ins because of the online poker crackdown. We believe the estimates are a year early. With sponsorship waning and less rookies playing online poker these days the sharks will not make much cash for buy ins. It might not be long enough for the losses to kick in.

The television portion of the tournament has taken a commercial hit. It's no surprise because the people who own these websites were huge sponsors particularly Poker Stars and Full Tilt Poker. If you watch the tournament on tv you'll see their logos are missing on the players. Even the Ultimate Fighter Championship events don't have these sponsors anymore. If ratings are down this year they can lose even more sponsors. One good thing is Godaddy signed on this year to sponsor the event and that is a good sign.

The bottom line is next year is the problem year. If poker players can not find online poker websites accepting players from the US, the players could lose interest and start different hobbies. Even if they wanted to to play and there is no place online, they may get frustrated. Either way the lack of [US poker sites](#) is an issue and the fact these players have never had there funds returned to them is another. The atmosphere over the next year can be bad.

So how do we fix it and maintain the the interest in best tournament in the world? That certainly will not be an easy one. Here are some ideas. First, if the government is prosecuting the operators of these poker sites criminally, then they should also pursue the funds being returned to the players just as vigorously. The poker players were not breaking any laws and their funds should be returned. Second, there needs to be a law that legalizes [online poker](#) at the very least if not all of gambling. The law makers should not use politics with the situation. It is time to get past the Indian gaming lobby and help the players. Until there is US poker sites again the sport is in trouble and so is the tournament.

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