With a mind boggling 8,700 entrants, the main event of the World Series of Poker features a 12 million dollar first place prize this year. The field has been narrowed down to just 27 players, and the leader is Hollywood agent Jamie Gold (pictured), who has 13 million in chips, and a 6 million dollar lead as the event enters it's seventh day. I've got all the latest in this update, including which professionals are still alive, and a recap of the action thus far.

8,700 players. Now down to 27.

The World Series of Poker, and poker in general, has absolutely exploded in popularity over the course of the last three years. This is thanks in large part to a man by the name of Chris Moneymaker.

The aptly named Moneymaker was previously an accountant from Tennessee who shocked the world and won the main event of the 2003 World Series of Poker, effectively starting "the poker craze" in the process. Moneymaker won his seat to the $10,000 buy in event by winning a satellite tournament online that cost him $39 to enter. Despite never playing in a live tournament before this one, Moneymaker bested a field of 839 contestants, kicking several of the worlds top poker pros to the curb in the process, and walked away with the 2.5 million dollar first prize.

What followed was madness. Poker on the internet became immensely popular, and the fields for the World Series of Poker and other prominent tournaments swelled greatly. America just witnessed an absolute nobody defeat some of the world's greatest poker players, turning $39 into two and half million bucks. The following year saw 2,576 enter the main event. In 2005 there were 5,619 contestants.

Forward ahead to this year. The main event had more than 8,700 players, and a mind-boggling first place prize of 12 million bucks. That field is now down to 27.

The leader is a guy by the name of Jamie Gold, a super agent to some of Hollywood's biggest names. Gold represents poker pro Johnny Chan, James Gandolfini, Lucy Liu, Felicity Huffman, and Jimmy Fallom amongst others, and is neighbors with poker pro Chris "Jesus" Ferguson in Malibu, CA. Through six days of action, Gold has amassed 13 million dollars in chips, and holds nearly a 6 million chip lead over second place Erik Friberg ... an aggressive but quiet Swede with little to no experience in events of this magnitude. In third place with 6.9

million in chips is David Einhorn from Rye, NY, who is vowing to donate all winnings to The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinsons Disease research, and is on the board of that foundation. In fourth place is Rhett Butler from Rockville, MD with 6.4 million and Dan Nassif, a St. Louis, MO ad executive is in fifth with 5.43 million.

The only professional player still alive in the field is the stoic Allen Cunningham, who is presently in 13th place with 2.65 million in chips. The flamboyant Humberto Brenes busted out late yesterday in 36th place. Other professionals who made excellent showings were Annie Duke, Daniel Negraneau, and last years champion Joseph Hachem.

The remaining 27 players will resume play today, and will continue until the field is diminished to nine, which represents the final table. Wednesday will be a day off, as the tournament is far ahead of schedule, which has been attributed to loose play from the tournaments many online qualifiers.

The first players eliminated today will earn over a half million dollars, and the final twelve players will all be guaranteed at least a million dollars, culminating in the 12 million dollar first place prize.