



2015 WSOP NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP OFFICIAL REPORT

LONI HARWOOD WINS WSOP NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AND \$341K

New York pro earns second career bracelet, bests elite field in one-of-a-kind event

MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET WINNER:

Name: Loni Harwood

Age: 25

Residence: Staten Island, N.Y.

Occupation: Professional poker player

Number of WSOP cashes: 30

Number of WSOP final table appearances: 8

Number of WSOP gold bracelet victories: 2

Number of WSOP gold ring victories: 2

Total WSOP career earnings: \$1,360,276

The above stats include all WSOP and WSOP Circuit in-the-money finishes.

TOURNAMENT RECAP:

July 31, 2015 (Cherokee, N.C.) – Loni Harwood became the fifth ever winner of the World Series of Poker National Championship on Friday at Harrah's Cherokee in Cherokee, N.C. She bested a stacked field of 122 professional poker players and WSOP Circuit grinders, earning her second WSOP gold bracelet and \$341,599.

Harwood earned her first bracelet two years ago in a \$1,500 No-Limit Hold'em event at the World Series in Las Vegas. That was part of a breakout—and record-breaking—summer for her. She cashed six times, made three final tables, and won one bracelet. She earned \$874,698 in payouts during the 2013 Series. At the time, it set a record for the most a female player had earned at a single WSOP. Prior to her impressive run in 2013, Harwood earned two WSOP Circuit rings in 2012, and she now has two bracelets

as well.

After securing her victory, Harwood's first thoughts were of her family. "I wanna shout out to my brother, Scott Harwood. He's one of my best friends. He's always there for me. He wanted to be here today, but he works and he couldn't get the day off. He's been on the virtual rail and I'm sure he's waiting for a phone call right now."

At times, Harwood seemed destined to win this event. She jumped into the chip lead late on Day 2 by busting out two players simultaneously. She entered Day 3 with a huge lead, more than double her closest competitor. She held the lead nearly all day, only relinquishing it briefly near the end of the day before retaking it for good.

If there was anyone else who might've been destined to win, it was Harwood's heads-up opponent, Alex Masek. Masek entered today last out of the seven players. He had only 100,000 in chips, and the big blind was 10,000 to start the day. Masek maneuvered his short-stack masterfully, though, and crept up the leaderboard to eventually take the lead from Harwood.

Masek is one of the most decorated players in WSOP Circuit history. He holds the record for most career Circuit rings, with eight, but has yet to earn his first WSOP bracelet, and fell just short today. Harwood showed a lot of respect to Masek, saying after the event, "He was definitely the opponent I didn't want to get heads up with."

The final day of the tournament was filmed by ESPN, and will be broadcast on August 18th.

Play started today at 1 p.m. with seven players remaining. The first elimination occurred after almost two hours of play, on the 47th hand of the day. Paul Mattioda busted out in seventh place for \$49,203.

It was the next bustout that broke the hearts of countless poker fans. Daniel Negreanu, one of the most famous and well-liked players in poker, participated in the National Championship for the first time. He made it to the final table, and entered Day 3 third in chips. He lost most of his chips just before the first break, though, and was eliminated shortly thereafter.

Negreanu is one of the most accomplished players in poker, and his list of accolades is virtually unparalleled. He has six WSOP bracelets, and was inducted into the Poker Hall of Fame last year in his first year of eligibility. Just a couple weeks ago, he nearly added another major accomplishment to his resume, but he fell just short of making the November Nine in the WSOP Main Event. (He finished in 11th place.) He ran deeper than that today, but fell a few spots short of his seventh career bracelet busting sixth and earning \$63,647.

The National Championship is an invitation-only tournament with a unique format. One hundred players earn free entries through success on the WSOP Circuit over the past

season. All Circuit Main Event winners get a free seat, as does the Casino Champion at each stop. The rest of the list of free seats comes from the top of the season-long points leaderboard. There is a minimum prize pool of \$1,000,000, and each one of these free seats is nominally worth \$10,000.

In addition, 100 players earn the right to pay \$10,000 to buy into the event directly. This right goes to the top 100 WSOP player-of-the-year point earners over the previous two years. This year, there were 122 total competitors, and a prize pool of \$1,220,000. Harwood and Negreanu bought in directly. All the other players on Day 3 earned free entries.

The fifth-place finisher was Vincent Moscati. Moscati cashed eight times on the Circuit this year, winning three rings in the process. He earned \$83,716 for his performance today.

Brad St. Vincent finished in fourth place. St. Vincent earned his seat into the National Championship by winning Casino Champion honors at Foxwoods in May. He finished Day 1 atop the leaderboard, and then finished Day 2 fifth in chips. His fourth-place finish today is worth \$111,984.

It was only about 45 minutes after St. Vincent's exit that Darryll Fish was eliminated in third place. Fish earned his seat into the National Championship by winning the Main Event at the Palm Beach Kennel Club in February, the first signature victory of his live tournament career. He was eliminated by Alex Masek in a hand that gave Masek the chip lead over Harwood as heads-up play began.

Also finishing in the money was defending champion Dominik Nitsche. Nitsche won this event last year when it was held in Atlantic City, earning his second career WSOP bracelet. He would go on to win a third just about a month later, and he finished in 15th place in this year's National Championship.

The tournament began on Wednesday with 122 competitors. They played 10 hour-long levels of poker on Day 1, and 49 players advanced to Day 2. They reached the money bubble midway through Level 16, and once Juan Mendoza was eliminated on the bubble, the remaining 15 players were guaranteed a payout of at least \$20,594.

The official final table of nine players was reached right at the end of Level 17. A little more than an hour later, after two more eliminations, the final seven players bagged up their chips until Wednesday.

It was no surprise to see numerous bracelet winners in this tough field, including the record holder for most career WSOP bracelets. Phil Hellmuth bought into this event, taking his seat just after dinner on Day 1. His stay was short lived, however, as he busted out just about two hours later. Several other multiple bracelet winners played this year's National Championship, including Jeff Madsen, John Monnette, Scott Clements, and Dominik Nitsche. Nitsche is the only player in this group who made the money.

With the National Championship complete, the 2015-2016 Circuit season is set to begin next week. The first event will be held at Foxwoods Resort Casino in Connecticut, beginning August 6th. Over the next ten months, players have the opportunity to qualify for a free seat into next year's Championship event. A full Circuit schedule is available [here](#).

Here are the full results from the 2015 WSOP National Championship:

- 1 – Loni Harwood - \$341,599
- 2 – Alex Masek - \$211,599
- 3 – Darryll Fish - \$152,402
- 4 – Brad St. Vincent - \$111,984
- 5 – Vincent Moscati - \$83,716
- 6 – Daniel Negreanu - \$63,647
- 7 – Paul Mattioda - \$49,203
- 8 – Seth Berger - \$38,650
- 9 – Jonathan Abla - \$30,854
- 10 – Robert Hankins - \$25,010
- 11 – Gevork Kasabyan - \$25,010
- 12 – Brian McDaniel - \$25,010
- 13 – Ari Engel - \$20,594
- 14 – Michael Sanders - \$20,594
- 15 – Dominik Nitsche - \$20,594

EVENT FACTS:

The final table featured two \$10,000 Player of the Year qualifiers – Loni Harwood and Daniel Negreanu.

Defending champion Dominik Nitsche ran deep for the second-consecutive year finishing 15th and earning \$20,594 in the process.

EVENT DIRECT LINKS:

Loni Harwood's official WSOP player profile page is available [HERE](#).

Final results, live reporting log, photos and official winner photo are available [HERE](#).