



2016 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

TEN YEARS AFTER: IAN JOHNS RIDES AWAY WITH H.O.R.S.E. GOLD BRACELET

Poker pro collects second gold bracelet and \$212,604 top prize in Event #8

Champion ranks dead last at end of first day, storms back, and achieves victory

Justin Bonomo denied his second gold bracelet, finishes as runner up

Seven former gold bracelet winners finish in top ten – including Ian Johns, Justin Bonomo, Georgios Sotiropoulos, Andre Akkari, Svetlana Gromenkova, Scotty Nguyen, and Ben Ponzio

MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Ian Johns

Birthplace: Seattle, WA (USA)

Age: 31

Current Residence: Seattle, WA (USA) / Las Vegas, NV (USA)

Marital Status: Married

Children: 3

Profession: Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 18

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 4

Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories (with this tournament): 2

Best Previous WSOP Finish: 1st (2006)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$703,300

Personal Facts: Plays \$80-160 almost daily and is a Limit Hold'em specialist

Quote of the Day:

“The feeling between my first victory and this one is the same. I’m hyper. I’m excited. I don’t think that ever goes away when you get this close and then achieve it. If it does go away, then maybe that’s when you shouldn’t play anymore.”

Ian Johns (after winning his second career WSOP gold bracelet)

Ian Johns is the newest member of poker’s gold bracelet club. This marked his second career victory following his debut victory ten years ago. That came in a Limit Hold’em event at the 2006 WSOP.

Ten years later, the poker pro originally from Newcastle, WA won the \$1,500 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. tournament, which was played over three days and nights at the Rio in Las Vegas. Johns collected \$212,604 in prize money, making this one of the biggest wins of his career. Amazingly, he was dead last in chips at the end of Day One – ranked 201st out of 201 survivors.

“I bagged up barely enough to post a blind, 2000 in chips,” Johns recalled later. “Then I came back on the second day and tripled up in Stud because the antes were enough to amount to a full double up, and in the next hour I built my stack up to 50,000.”

That was just but one of three comebacks Johns would make in this tourney.

“It just goes to show you should never give up. When we were at 12 players, I was the second-shortest stack in the tournament. I had 118,000 and then right after dinner, I was up to 950,000. There’s no reason to give up in these things because even when you’re down, all you have to do is win three hands in a row and you’re right back in it.”

The third lightning strike occurred late in the tournament and at the perfect time. Just when it looked like Justin Bonomo was about to pull away and win what would have been his second gold bracelet, Johns dug in and managed to win a key hand, reversing the table momentum.

Johns won his victory by conquering a final table which included six past gold bracelet winners – including himself, Justin Bonomo, Georgios Sotiropoulos, Andre Akkari, Svetlana Gromenkova, and Scotty Nguyen.

After a fierce heads-up battle during which both players had sizable chip leads at various points, the limits became so high (36 big bets total in chips on the table between both players) that a couple of hands played to the conclusion could swing the final decision in one player’s favor. The ultimate moment of triumph came when Johns scooped the final pot of the tournament, against Justin Bonomo, who finished as the runner up.

Interestingly, Johns and Bonomo had a long history of playing together, dating back more than ten years. They often faced each other online.

“This final table was ridiculous,” Johns said of the level of competition he faced. “I knew just about everyone here, and I was thinking, we could even talk poker strategy. I’m pretty sure all eight players were pros. You don’t see that very often, especially in a \$1,500 event. You expect some non-pros to make it through....obviously, it felt really good to beat Justin (Bonomo). He’s a great player and it’s gratifying to win against him.”

As for his poker career, Johns splits his time between living in Las Vegas, where he plays poker full time, and Seattle, WA which he still calls his hometown. In fact, Johns was cheered to victory by a large rail which included several other poker players who were natives of the Seattle area, most notably Jeff Shulman and Rep Porter.

Johns is a Limit Hold’em specialist. He mostly plays \$80-160 limit cash games. However, he also tries to play as many Limit Hold’em tournaments as he can, and ventures into Mixed Game formats such as H.O.R.S.E. on occasion. He finished tenth in last year’s \$10K buy-in Limit Hold’em Championship. He finished 17th twice in that same event, as well, even more proof of his Limit prowess.

This tourney attracted 778 players which created a prize pool totaling \$1,050,300. The top 117 finishers collected a payout.

H.O.R.S.E. has been a staple of the WSOP over the past 15 years. It’s a mix of five standard poker games, including Hold’em, Omaha High-Low Split, Razz, Seven-Card Stud, and Stud Eight-or-Better. Mixed game tournaments have expanded substantially in recent years. However, H.O.R.S.E. was the original multi-game format intended to test competitors in a broader spectrum of poker variants. H.O.R.S.E. remains the format used to determine the Poker Players Champion, now in its 11th year.

Here’s a brief report of the other top finishers who made the final table:

Second Place: Justin Bonomo, the well-known poker pro who earned his gold bracelet two years ago in a Six-Handed No-Limit Hold’em event, finished as the runner up. He pocketed \$131,412. Amazingly, this was his seventh time to make the top three in a WSOP gold bracelet event. Bonomo now has 35 career cashes and more than \$2.7 million in WSOP-related earnings.

Third Place: Christopher Vitch, from La Jolla, CA added to his tournament resume with a fourth WSOP final table appearance, including what amounts to three top-3 finishes, by finishing third. Vitch collected \$92,374 in prize money. He’s cashed at least once every year since 2010.

Fourth Place: Noah Bronstein, from Kirkland, WA came in fourth. This was his 31st time to cash at the WSOP, which paid out \$65,866.

Fifth Place: Georgios Sotiropoulos, from Farrell, Greece won a gold bracelet last year at WSOP-Europe. All of his 11 cashes have occurred since 2014. The player who was born on the island of Rhodes (Greece) rode off with \$47,651 for a nice effort.

Sixth Place: Andre Akkari, from Sao Paulo, Brazil became the second Brazilian gold bracelet winner in 2011. One of South America's most popular players, Akkari now has 20 series cashes. The \$34,984 in prize money he collected puts him closer to \$1 million in career WSOP earnings.

Seventh Place: Svetlana Gromenkova, from New York, NY took seventh place, which paid \$26,070. She won the 2008 Ladies World Championship and now has three cashes this year, and 17 in-the-money finishes at the WSOP. She was the third female to make it to a final table at this year's series.

Eighth Place: Scotty Nguyen, a four-time gold bracelet winner and the 1998 world poker champion, rounded out the final table as the eighth-place finisher. This marked his 52nd time to cash. The \$19,724 paid out to Nguyen for this finish adds to his \$5.2 million in lifetime earnings at the WSOP.

This was the 8th event on this year's schedule. That leaves 61 tournaments still to go at the 2016 WSOP.

OTHER NOTABLE IN-THE MONEY FINISHERS:

Ben Ponzio, the winner of a gold bracelet in 2007, posted his highest finish at the WSOP in nine years by coming in tenth.

Maureen Feduniak, who has been playing in WSOP event for nearly two decades and once finished as high as second in a gold bracelet event back in 2006, came in 13th. This was her first time to cash at the series in nine years.

Matt Glantz, a top poker pro from the Philadelphia area with \$2.6 million in WSOP earnings and several high finishes, came in 20th.

Ivo Donev, a gold bracelet winner at the 2000 WSOP, finished 22nd.

Rep Porter, who has won two gold bracelets, came in 24th.

Rich Korbin, a gold bracelet winner and one of the former executives who built PokerStars.com, finished 25th.

Other notables who cashed included – Chris Klodnicki, Naoya Kohara (Japan's first-ever gold bracelet winner), Chris Tryba, Bill Gazes, Tom McCormick, Owais Ahmed, Gary Benson, Richard Ashby, Brian Hastings, Bryan Micon, Brandon Cantu, Roland "Speedy" Israelashvili, and Mel Judah.

Poker ambassador, gold bracelet winner, and Poker Hall of Fame member Mike Sexton cashed in this event.

Former world poker champion, five-time gold bracelet winner, and Poker Hall of Fame member Berry Johnston, cashed in this event.

FUN FACTS:

H.O.R.S.E. was first spread as a poker tournament at the epic 2003 WSOP, which was scheduled along with S.H.O.E., the two events designed as a wordplay on the former host casino – the HORSESHOE. Fittingly, the very first H.O.R.S.E. tournament was won by Doyle Brunson (his ninth career win).

EVENT DIRECT LINKS:

For this event's final official results (with a list of all players that cashed), please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1232&tid=14908>

For Ian Johns' official player profile page, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=14976>

For the live reporting logs for this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1232&tid=14908>

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