



## 2016 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

### RYAN LAPLANTE WINS BIGGEST POT-LIMIT OMAHA TOURNAMENT IN HISTORY

26-year-old poker pro from Minnesota collects \$190,328 top prize in Event #12

\$565 multi-entry tournament is largest live non-Hold'em tournament ever

Sean Shah finishes as runner up

### MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Ryan LaPlante

Birthplace: Madison, WI (USA)

Age: 26

Current Residence: Brainerd, MN

Marital Status: Engaged

Children: None

Profession: Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 18

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 4

Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories (with this tournament): 1

Best Previous WSOP Finish: 5<sup>th</sup> (2014)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$504,266

Personal Facts: One of the top Pot-Limit Omaha High-Low Split (online) tournament players in the world

Quote of the Day:

*"The World Series of Poker is the biggest thing in poker. If you don't have a gold bracelet, to some degree some people don't consider you as good. They'll say, 'Oh he's so good, BUT – he doesn't have the bracelet. To get something like this that I*

*have been working so hard for, for such a long time, and going through sweats, is just incredible.”*

Ryan LaPlante (latest WSOP gold bracelet winner)

Of the dozen gold bracelets awarded at this year’s World Series of Poker thus far, Ryan LaPlante attracted the largest and most loyal following. The 26-year-old poker pro from Brainerd, MN was energized by the large crowd and ended up rewarding his throngs of supporters with a thrilling tournament victory in the most recent championship event at the WSOP.

LaPlante won the \$565 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha tournament, which was played over three days and nights and concluded under the bright lights of the ESPN main stage at the Rio in Las Vegas.

LaPlante collected \$190,328 in prize money, making this one of the biggest wins of his career. This marked his 18th time to cash at the series, dating back to 2011. His best previous showing had been a fifth-place finish in a \$3,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold’em event played back in 2014.

Poker has been in LaPlante’s DNA from an early age. He spent much of his years as a teenager watching poker on television and longed for the day when he could compete amongst the game’s superstars. That finally came in 2011, and LaPlante has been pursuing his life’s dream ever since.

“I decided at a pretty young age I was going to do what I loved for a living,” LaPlante said. “I wasn’t going to worry about the money. So, about 11 or 12, right around the time of Chris MoneyMaker, I started watching it on TV. I would watch it, and re-watch it, and re-re-watch it. Since then, I’ve watched every single hand every single year and studied the hole cards.”

LaPlante’s goals were temporarily interrupted by the events surrounding Black Friday, when American online poker pros were dealt a severe setback in not being able to play over the Internet. LaPlante spent the next five years bouncing back and forth between the U.S. and various places in Canada and Mexico, which still allowed online poker. In the meantime, LaPlante was able to craft his skills and become one of the best online poker pros, albeit his name was little known outside online poker circles.

That relative anonymity is likely due to change now that LaPlante owns a gold bracelet, a deeply cherish personal and professional accomplishment that wasn’t lost on the humble young man who worked much of his life to get to this moment of triumph.

“Between lots of good friends and having lots of online PLO experience, that made a big difference,” LaPlante said. He went on to cite several friends in the poker community who were essential to him in improving his skills. “We would talk strategy all the time,” LaPlante said when asked about the importance of a poker network. “It’s really important to be able to discuss hands with someone you can trust and get better.”

With 2,483 entrants, this was the biggest Pot-Limit Omaha competition in live poker history. It shattered the old record set previously at the WSOP. In fact, it was the largest live non-Hold'em tournament ever held. A big turnout was certainly expected, especially given the bargain basement entry fee for the first such tournament of this poker variant with a \$565 buy-in. As for the re-entry option, LaPlante the winner fired twice and thus unvested a total of \$1,130 to win a prize nearly 180 times that amount.

The first day's action was wild unpredictable. Most first days gradually whittle the field size down to about a quarter to one-half of the original starters. However, this tournament played at a rocket-fast pace, all the way down to just 80 survivors, which was about 3 percent of the field. Day Two slowed down somewhat, which left just nine players to come back for Day Three. The last day lasted about five hours.

LaPlante won his victory by conquering a final table which included several relative newcomers to WSOP final day action. Three players – notably LaPlante, along with Darryll Fish -- had been in this spot before. However, most of the other aspirants took seats under the bright lights of the final table for the first time.

Sean Shah, a 29-year-old poker pro born in Pakistan and now residing in Delray Beach, FL finished as the runner up. Interesting, the man with a Masters Degree and now a second-place finish as the WSOP once appeared on the television game show, "Wheel of Fortune."

Right after the heads-up match, LaPlante paid his final opponent the ultimate compliment: "Sean's a very skilled PLO player," LaPlante said. "I knew I had to be careful with him. Honestly, a lot of what I was doing when it got down to 3 or 4 players I had picked up from him. I started to do what he was doing."

This record turnout created a prize pool totaling \$1,241,500. The top 373 finishers collected prize money.

Aside from the winner, here's a brief report of the other top finishers who made the final table:

**Second Place:** Sean Shah, from Delray Beach, FL came in second. He was down by about a 2-1 margin during the final hour of the tourney, and couldn't make much movement from the position of disadvantage. This marked his seventh time to cash at the WSOP and was his best showing, which paid out \$117,531.

**Third Place:** Tesfaldet Tekle, from Tukwila, WA went out in third place. The poker player born in the East African nation of Eritrea enjoyed his best finish at the WSOP, which paid \$85,870. However, Tekle did win a WSOP Circuit gold ring four years ago at The Bicycle Casino in Los Angeles.

**Fourth Place:** Richard St. Peter, from Susonville, CA cashed for the seventh time at the series, dating back to 2000. He collected \$63,304 in prize money.

**Fifth Place:** Charlie Coultas, from Seattle, WA and a graduate of the University of Washington, took fifth place in what was his seventh series cash. He pocketed

\$47,092. Coultas has also cashed twice in the WSOP Main Event Championship, in 2015 and 2012. In fact, he took 34<sup>th</sup> place four years ago, which paid out nearly a quarter-million dollars.

**Sixth Place:** Adil Khan, from Coral Springs, FL cashed for this third time this year, a result which paid out \$35,353.

**Seventh Place:** Matthew Livingston, from North Las Vegas, NV cashed for the ninth time as the WSOP. His payout totaled \$26,786.

**Eighth Place:** Darryll Fish, from Las Vegas, NV was another crowd favorite. He put in many years to reach this stage but wasn't able to last beyond the early stage of the final table. Fish, now with 28 cashes at the WSOP and several deep runs in major tournaments around the country, collected \$20,484 for making it to Day Three.

**Ninth Place:** Grant Ellis, from Whitby, Canada was the only non-American among the top nine. This was his second time to cash this years, which paid \$15,813.

This was the 12th event on this year's schedule. This still leaves another 57 gold bracelet tournaments to be played at the 2016 WSOP.

#### **OTHER NOTABLE IN-THE MONEY FINISHERS:**

Chris Ferguson, the 2000 world poker champion, cashed for the second time at this year's series after a long absence from the poker scene. He finished in 13<sup>th</sup> place.

Nick Jivkov, winner of a gold bracelet and three WSOP Circuit gold rings, finished in 16<sup>th</sup> place.

Robert Mizrachi, who won his fourth WSOP gold bracelet in the first week of the 2016 series, finished in 35<sup>th</sup> place.

Adrian Buckley, winner of last year's Millionaire Maker tourney, which paid out \$1.2 million, finished in 39<sup>th</sup> place,

David "ODB" Baker, a gold bracelet winner, finished in 50<sup>th</sup> place.

Other notables who finished beyond the top 50 included – Shannon Shorr, Yevgeniy Timoshenko, Jeremy Ausmus, Dan Kelly, Adam Lippert, Jason Koon, Ryan D'Angelo, Barny Boatman, Ross Boatman, Brock Parker, Rep Porter, Jeff Madsen, Roland Israelashvili, J.P. Kelly, Loni Harwood, Scott Clements, and Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi.

## **FUN FACTS:**

The record field size was bolstered by the re-entry option. However, 1,512 unique entrants still made it the largest Pot-Limit Omaha tournament ever held.

The breakdown of re-entries was as follows:

*One Entry – 1,512*

*Two Entries – 614*

*Three Entries – 238*

*Four Entries – 81*

*Five Entries – 25*

*Six Entries – 10*

*Seven Entries – 3*

The age of participants ranged from 21 up to 84. Robert Templeton was the oldest player in the tournament (he cashed). The average age of players was 39 years.

The gender breakdown of entries was – 97 percent male and 3 percent female.

The breakdown of U.S. versus international players was – 1,981 Americans and 502 players from abroad. The top five nations with participants was – United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, and Germany.

## **EVENT DIRECT LINKS:**

For this event's official final results (listing all players who finished in-the-money), please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1232&tid=14912>

For Ryan LaPlante's official player profile page, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=121043>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1232&tid=14912>

To access licensed images from this all other 2016 WSOP gold bracelet events, please visit:

[www.pokerphotoarchive.com](http://www.pokerphotoarchive.com)

For the live stream archive of this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=2>

*(Note: Will appear 48 hours after event concludes)*

*Written by Nolan Dalla (WSOP Media Staff)*