



## Las Vegas Qui Nguyen Wins World Series of Poker® Main Event

### 39-Year-Old Nguyen Wins \$8.005 Million and his First WSOP Gold Bracelet

**LAS VEGAS (Nov. 2, 2016)** – The string of twenty-something’s winning the World Series of Poker Main Event is over as 39-year-old Las Vegas resident and Saigon, Vietnam native **Qui Nguyen** is the new world champion of poker. Nguyen took the lead on the very first hand of the final table on Sunday and rode the momentum capturing his very first World Series of Poker ([WSOP](#)) gold bracelet and the top prize of \$8,005,310 in gaming’s richest and most prestigious event after a marathon poker session that concluded at 3:20am in the Rio’s Penn & Teller Theater on Wednesday morning.

[Nguyen](#) is a married father of a four-year old son, who once owned a nail salon in Alaska and now fancies himself as a professional gambler in Las Vegas. He becomes just the second Vietnamese-born world poker champion, following Poker Hall of Famer [Scotty “The Prince of Poker” Nguyen](#), who captured the title in this event in 1998.

“Thank you to all my friends and family,” said the new champion moments after the victory. “I’m so excited. I don’t know what to say. I just tried to remind myself to never give up, to never give up. It was tiring, it was tough, but I wanted to stay aggressive and never give up and thankfully for me it worked out.”

Playing an aggressive style, and arguably the least accomplished player at the table coming in, Nguyen did the unimaginable by constantly playing pots, applying pressure and putting his tablemates to tough decisions. In the end, the combination of cards, fortitude and aggression led Nguyen to capture poker’s ultimate championship. He came into the WSOP with just one previous WSOP cash on his resume – a [54<sup>th</sup> place finish in a \\$1,500 No-Limit Hold’em event in 2009](#) -- that won him \$9,029. With just \$52,986 in lifetime live poker winnings, no one expected Nguyen to be the last man standing against an experienced, accomplished final table full of mostly poker professionals.

The runner up was 27-year-old San Francisco, California resident Gordon Vayo. The recently engaged Vayo’s terrific run finally ended after besting 6,735 other hopefuls, but he leaves with \$4,661,228 for his efforts. He entered the final table in third place, picked his spots carefully and came within one spot of becoming the world champion. Vayo was looking to become the ninth consecutive twenty-something to win the crown, and while he had the chip lead at various points tonight, he lost a big pot when his two pair was no match for Nguyen’s flush, and he was never able to mount a sustained comeback after that point. Vayo, a professional [poker player](#) throughout his adulthood, has played this event every year since 2011. He had a great 2016 WSOP, cashing eight times in 21 events, and already has earned more than \$6 million playing the game he loves, with more than \$5 million coming at the WSOP. He previously finished in [second place in a WSOP event in 2014, winning \\$314,535](#).

During the 100+day hiatus Vayo won a tournament in September for \$587,120. Originally from New London, Connecticut, Vayo is a long-time [internet poker player](#), whom has a bright future on the live circuit as well.

Vayo was gracious in defeat, remarking afterwards: “It was a little frustrating at times, but he played phenomenal. I didn’t get a lot of hands heads up, but all the credit to Qui, he played great.”

On the final hand of this 11-day poker game, Nguyen raised to 8,500,000 and was raised all-in by Vayo for his last 53,000,000 chips. Nguyen without much hesitation called and the cards were turned over. Vayo showed a Jack and Ten of Spades, while Nguyen tabled the King and Ten of Clubs. Nguyen’s hand was stronger and it was now up to the five community cards to determine the fate of both participants. The board ran out Seven of Diamonds, King of Diamonds, Nine of Clubs, which gave Nguyen a pair of Kings, but also gave Vayo outs with an eight or queen completing a straight. However, the fourth card (the turn) was a Two of Spades, and the fifth and final card (the river card) was a Three of Hearts and Vayo did not improve, giving Nguyen a pair of Kings and the final pot of the tournament.

From an event that began way back on July 9, 2016 with 6,737 hopefuls who each ponied up the \$10,000 entry fee and received 50,000 in starting tournament chips, Nguyen, wearing his trademark Rocket Raccoon hat from *Marvel’s Garden of the Galaxy* and tinted sunglasses and plenty of bling, used his table image and his gambling lifestyle to perfection. He ultimately outlasted them all, capturing all 336,850,000 chips in play and winning the \$8.005 million first place prize and the Josten’s-crafted half-million dollar WSOP gold bracelet. The total prize pool up for grabs in the event was \$63,340,268.

Nguyen captured the WSOP world championship in the wee hours Wednesday morning at the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas in the famed Penn & Teller theatre. The event took nearly 44 levels of play to complete, which equates to nearly 88 hours of poker play to reach a victor. In real time though, the event took 10 playing days, plus a few extra hours this morning, spread out over 115 calendar days to become the champion. When play began in July, players started with 50,000 in chips and the blinds were at 75 and 150. When play completed at 3:20 am in Las Vegas with 39 minutes, 58 seconds left in Level 43, blinds were at 1,500,000 and 3,000,000 with antes of 500,000.

Three-handed play began Tuesday evening at 5:30 pm PT and lasted 80 minutes before the chip leader entering this tournament, [Cliff Josephy](#) was eliminated. Josephy, 50, from Syosset, New York, with a degree from the University of Michigan, was looking to become the event’s oldest winner since the November Nine era began in 2008. The married father of three boys, Josephy, a former Wall Street banker, was the only one at this final table with previous WSOP victories. The two-time WSOP gold bracelet winner had a tough go early, after two days of being card dead, Josephy, a big New York Mets fan, came into tonight’s place third in chips. He won a huge pot the first hand of the night, but ultimately lost a key hand when his three-of-a-kind deuces lost to Vayo’s set of threes. Josephy earns a nice payday of \$3,453,035, more than the \$2,641,620 in live tournament winnings he had amassed prior to this event. This marks Josephy’s largest ever live poker tournament cash, and puts him with nearly \$6 million in earnings including more than \$4.2 million at the WSOP via 17 cashes.

It then took eight-and-a-half hours of heads-up play before Nguyen was able to finally dispatch of Vayo, the game challenger, who never relented, but was unable to ever overtake Nguyen in chips once heads up play began.

Rounding out the final table were:

4<sup>th</sup> place: Michael Ruane, Hoboken, New Jersey, \$2,576,003  
5<sup>th</sup> place: Vojtech Ruzicka, Prague, Czech Republic, \$1,935,288  
6<sup>th</sup> place: Kenny Hallaert, Hansbeke, Belgium, \$1,464,258  
7<sup>th</sup> place: Griffin Bengier, Toronto, Canada, \$1,250,190  
8<sup>th</sup> place: Jerry Wong, Coconut Creek, Florida, \$1,100,076  
9<sup>th</sup> place: Fernando Pons, Palma, Spain, \$1,000,000

Monday's action was carried on a 30-minute delay on ESPN2. Tonight's finale was carried on the flagship [ESPN](#) on 30-minute delay. The 2016 WSOP Main Event began on July 9 with a total of 6,737 entrants. The event's total prize pool was \$63,340,268, with more than \$25 million going to the final nine players. A record total of 1,011 entrants cashed in the event.

As has become tradition in recent years, Main Event play was suspended in July when the tournament reached its final nine players. It resumed with the "[November Nine](#)" taking to the felt 113 days later, on Sunday with 32 minutes and 50 seconds remaining in Level 35, with antes of 75,000 and blinds at 250,000 and 500,000. Play lasted 6 hours and 10 minutes in real time on Sunday, but consumed 4 hours, 44 minutes of tournament clock play and led to the elimination of four players.

Monday's action started with one hour, 47 minutes and 56 seconds left in Level 38 with blinds at 500,000 and 1,000,000 with a 150,000 ante. Two more players were eliminated on Monday's that spanned 2 hours, 50 minutes of poker play and ended in Level 39 (200,000 antes, with blinds at 600,000 and 1,200,000), with 58 minutes and 29 seconds left in the level.

The 2016 WSOP attracted a record 107,844 players from 107 countries to its 69 events, generating a total prize pool of more than \$221 million.

To view the hand-for-hand recap of the final table play, please click the following link:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?rr=5&grid=1232&tid=14968&dayof=>

#### **About the World Series of Poker**

The World Series of Poker® is the largest, richest and most prestigious gaming event in the world, having awarded more than \$2.4 billion in prize money and the prestigious gold bracelet, globally recognized as the sport's top prize. Featuring a comprehensive slate of tournaments in every major poker variation, the WSOP is poker's longest-running tournament in the world, dating back to 1970. In 2016, the event attracted 107,844 entrants from 107 different countries to the Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, and awarded more than \$221 million in prize money. In addition, the WSOP has formed groundbreaking alliances in broadcasting, digital media and corporate sponsorships, while successfully expanding the brand internationally with the advent of the World Series of Poker Circuit Tour in 2005, the World Series of Poker Europe in 2007 and the World Series of Poker Asia-Pacific in 2013. For more information on the World Series of Poker, please visit [www.wsop.com](http://www.wsop.com).

Media Contact:

Seth Palansky, WSOP, [spalansky@caesars.com](mailto:spalansky@caesars.com) or 702-407-6344