

Media outlet Poker News called it “Kreskin-like.”

Friedman looked up. He shook his head in disbelief. Then, his proverbial jaw dropped to the ground, choreographed in perfect unison with a hundred gasps in the crowd that witnessed one of the boldest final table calls of the year at the WSOP.

When Friedman showed dejection at the call, Steury instantly knew he was right and he had made the perfect read. As it turned out, Friedman too had missed his straight draw – albeit with two lower-ranked cards. Steury may have only had “queen high,” but he turned up his cards with the confidence of a conqueror who had out-analyzed, out-foxed, and as it turned out, outplayed a very strong opponent. He might as well have been tabling a royal flush.

The final table played on for another 90 minutes. But the outcome was really decided *then and there*.

Buoyed with self-confidence, Steury could do no wrong. From that moment forward, he knew he could trust his reads and inner instincts. To a successful poker player, this is the jet fuel that rockets dreams into reality. It's the victory switch.

On it went. As for his final two unfortunate opponents, the duo might as well have been playing poker with their hole cards exposed. Facing an opponent who's in what's called “the zone,” and has just revealed the uncanny ability to make startlingly accurate reads is as deflating to the player on the opposite end of the table as is the aura of confidence that surrounds the poker superman.

Thirty or so hands later, it was all over.

Aaron Steury was a WSOP champion.

Steury won the \$1,500 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. Championship, held at the Rio in Las Vegas. The three-day tournament attracted 963 players, a near-record for any Mixed Game format.

Steury is a 24-year-old poker pro and self-described grinder, from Fort Wayne, IN. He came into this year's WSOP with eight previous WSOP cashes. His best showing had been a 14th-place finish in the \$5,000 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. Championship, played in 2009. But this triumph trumped everything he'd done before and paid out nearly three times the combined figure that he earned up to this point. Steury received \$289,283 in prize money for this victory. But the real treasure he collected was priceless – his first WSOP gold bracelet.

The final table was played on the same ESPN main stage that hosted the John Juanda-Phil Hellmuth showdown the night before. While the finalists' names in this tournament might not have been quite as familiar, the level of competition was just as intense, the caliber of play was just as strong, and the final outcome was just as thrilling. At least, Aaron Steury would agree.

The runner up was Michael Chow, from Honolulu, HI. He won last year's \$1,500 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split event. This time he took second place, which paid \$178,691.

Several former gold bracelet winners cashed in this event – including Denis Ethier (6th), David Bach (14th), Todd Brunson (19th), Eli Elezra (21st), Farzad Rouhani (25th), Ken Aldridge (30th), Layne Flack (48th), Lyle Berman (49th), Max Pescatori (52nd), Cyndy Violette (55th), Ryan Hughes (58th), Svetlana Gromenkova (69th), Allen Bari (78th), Ivo Donev (83rd) and David Chiu (93rd).

H.O.R.S.E. is an acronym for five of the most popular poker games played inside American card rooms today. H.O.R.S.E. tournaments include a rotation of the following games – Hold'em, Omaha High-Low Split, Razz, Seven-Card Stud, and Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split (also called Eight-or-Better). Many purists consider H.O.R.S.E. to be the ultimate test of poker skill, since it requires that players play all games well in order to win.

For a complete statistical recap of Event #17, please visit WSOP.com [HERE](#).

EVENT #17 CHAMPION – AARON STEURY

The 2011 World Series of Poker \$1,500 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. champion is Aaron Steury, from Fort Wayne, IN.

Steury is a 24-year-old professional poker player.

Steury was born in his hometown of Fort Wayne.

Steury attended college for three years, but he did not graduate. Steury attended Indiana-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW). He majored in business. He plans to return and finish his degree at some point.

Steury's parents were not initially pleased with their son's decision to play poker professionally. But he has now been successful for four years and they have come to support his career choice. Steury added that this WSOP gold bracelet victory will likely bring more encouragement from his family

Steury was primarily an online poker player up until recent events that now threaten his livelihood. He played in high-stakes cash games and multi-table tournaments.

This was the fourth consecutive year Steury has attended the WSOP in Las Vegas.

Steury's previous live poker tournament results include eight WSOP cashes and a third-place finish in an event at the WSOP Circuit held the first year at Horseshoe Hammond (Chicago).

For this victory in this tournament, Steury collected \$289,283 for first place.

According to official records, Steury now has 1 win, 1 final table appearance, and 9 in-the-money finishes at the WSOP.

Steury currently has \$369,663 in career WSOP winnings.

Steury is to be regarded as a professional poker player, since he has been playing full-time for the past four years.

WINNER QUOTES (*Note: The winner was interviewed at tableside moments after the victory*)

On the implications of Black Friday on his livelihood as a poker pro and decision to attend the WSOP: *"I was coming here anyway. Since I was 21, I have come here all four years."*

On the level of competition he faced in this H.O.R.S.E. event: *"This is one of the softest WSOP fields. There are a lot of people who do not know what they are doing. As you would expect, Day One was easier, then Day Two got a bit tougher, and then Day Three was very tough. There were two gold bracelet winners, and David Baker, and Adam Friedman who are all good players."*

On the "sick call" where he made an uncanny read versus Adam Friedman: *"I thought there was a pretty good chance I had the best hand.....I was right and I was confident the rest of the tournament. I was spot on. That was the turning point."*

THE FINAL TABLE

The official final table was comprised eight players.

The final table contained two former gold bracelet winners – Denis Ethier (1 win) and David Chow (1 win).

Only two nations were represented at the final table – including Italy (1 player), and the United States (7 players).

When play began, the final table chip leader was Adam Friedman. The starting chips counts were as follows:

Adam Friedman – 1,006,000 in chips
Michael Chow – 907,000 in chips
Aaron Steury – 757,000 in chips
Ron Ware – 507,000 in chips
David Baker – 455,000 in chips
Jonathan Tamayo – 450,000 in chips
Denis Ethier – 139,000 in chips
Paolo Compagno – 123,000 in chips

When heads-up play began, Steury had a chip lead of slightly more than 4-to-1.

The runner up was Michael Chow, from Honolulu, HI. He is a 35-year-old poker pro. Chow won last year's \$1,500 buy-in Omaha High-Low event. This time, he took second place and earned \$178,691.

The third-place finisher was Adam Friedman, from Gahanna, OH. He enjoyed a breakthrough year in poker back in 2005, when he took 43rd in the WSOP Main Event Championship. Friedman became a minor celebrity, as he was utterly devastated by his elimination. Friedman let all his emotions out, with ESPN cameras rolling and became one of the more memorable "agony of defeat" poster boys of the World Series of Poker that year. Many observers thought this might finally be Friedman's moment and redemption. But his ultimate triumph and moment of glory will have to wait a bit longer.

An odd coincidence – Friedman is a graduate of Indiana University. The winner attended Indiana University for one year.

The fourth-place finisher was former gold bracelet winner Jonathan Tamayo, from Humble, TX. He previously won the \$2,000 buy-in Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split event at the 2005 WSOP.

The fifth-place finisher was Ron Ware, best-known in the poker world as "Grumpy." He is a poker pro from Discovery Bay, CA.

The sixth-place finisher was former gold bracelet winner Denis Ethier, from Las Vegas, NV. He previously won the \$2,000 buy-in Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split event at the 2005 WSOP.

The seventh-place finisher was David Baker, from Kenner, LA. This marked his fifth time to cash at the WSOP, including an in-the-money finish at last year's WSOP. *Note: He is not the same David Baker who has a gold bracelet win.*

The eighth-place finisher was Paolo Compagno, from Campione, Italy. Compagno is one of a growing number of Italian players enjoying increasing success at the WSOP.

Final table play began at 7:45 pm on a Sunday afternoon. Play ended at 2:05 am Monday evening. The finale went about 6 hours and 20 minutes.

The final table was played on ESPN's Main Stage. The new final table set is getting raves in terms of design and appearance. No stage in the history of poker has ever looked as spectacular.

Action was streamed live over WSOP.com. Viewers can tune in and watch most of this year's final tables. Although hole cards are not shown, viewers can follow an overhead camera as well as a pan-shot of the table. The floor announcer provides an official account of the action.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS

The top 96 finishers collected prize money.

The defending champion was Konstantin Puchkov, from Moscow, Russia. He did not cash this year.

Several former gold bracelet winners cashed in this event – including Denis Ethier (6th), David Bach (14th), Todd Brunson (19th), Eli Elezra (21st), Farzad Rouhani (25th), Ken Aldridge (30th), Layne Flack (48th), Lyle Berman (49th), Max Pescatori (52nd), Cyndy Violette (55th), Ryan Hughes (58th), Svetlana Gromenkova (69th), Allen Bari (78th), Ivo Donev (83rd), and David Chiu (93rd).

Just missing the official final table by one spot was Victor Ramdin, a well-known and widely-respected pro. Although Ramdin has performed well in other tournaments worldwide, remarkably he has yet to make a WSOP final table during his career. Finishing one spot from the final table had to be a disappointment to Ramdin. However, one expects it's just a matter of time before things go Ramdin's way.

Tournament results are to be included in the WSOP official records. Results are also to be included in the 2011 WSOP "Player of the Year" race.

"WSOP Player of the Year" standings can be found at WSOP.com [HERE](#).

At the time of this report, the current leader in the WSOP "Player of the Year" standings is Amir Lehavot. He holds a slight lead over Viacheslav Zhukov, who is in second place.

ODDS AND ENDS

This is the 910th gold bracelet awarded in World Series of Poker history. This figure includes every official WSOP event ever played, including tournaments during the early years when there were no actual gold bracelets awarded. It also includes the 16 gold bracelets awarded to date at WSOP Europe (2007-2010). Moreover for the first time ever, one gold bracelet was awarded for this year's winner of the WSOP Circuit National Championship.

The official WSOP gold bracelet ceremony takes place on the day following the winner's victory (or some hours later when the tournament ends very late). The ceremony takes place inside The Pavilion, which is the expansive main tournament room hosting all noon starts this year. The ceremony begins at the conclusion of the first break of the noon tournament. The ceremony usually starts around 2:20 pm. The national anthem of the winner's nation is played. The entire presentation is open to the public and media. Video and photography is permitted by both the public and members of the media.

Steury's gold bracelet ceremony is set to take place on Monday, June 13th. The national anthem of the USA will be played in honor of his victory.

EVENT HISTORY

Mixed games are becoming increasingly more popular with many tournament players. The forbearer of H.O.R.S.E. was called S.H.O.E. (a similar mix of games including Seven-Card Stud, Limit Hold'em, Omaha High-Low Split, and Stud High-Low Split), which was introduced at the 2001 WSOP.

H.O.R.S.E. was played for the first time as a gold bracelet event at the 2003 WSOP. Organizers thought it would be interesting to hold one H.O.R.S.E. tournament to go with the S.H.O.E. event, which took place at Binion's "Horseshoe."

The first WSOP H.O.R.S.E. tournament was won by Doyle Brunson.

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The rotation of games in this tournament lasts eight hands. In other words – following eight dealt hands of Hold'em, there are eight hands of Omaha High-Low followed by eight hands of Razz, and so forth.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

The tournament was played over three consecutive days.

The tournament officially began on Friday, June 10th at noon. The tournament officially ended on Monday, June 13th, at 2:05 am.

2011 WSOP STATISTICS

Through the conclusion of Event #17, the 2011 WSOP has attracted 15,695 entries. \$30,271,010 in prize money has been awarded to winners, to date.

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the nationality of gold bracelet winners has been:

United States (13)
Great Britain (2)
Russia (1)
Canada (1)

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the national origin (birthplace) of winners has been:

United States (9)
Great Britain (2)
Ukraine (1)
Israel (1)
Russia (1)
Honduras (1)
Canada (1)
Indonesia (1)

Through the conclusion of this event, the home-states of (American) winners have been:

Nevada (3)
California (2)
Illinois (1)
New York (1)
New Jersey (1)
Florida (1)
Texas (1)
Tennessee (1)
Connecticut (1)
Indiana (1)

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the breakdown of professional poker players to semi-pros and amateurs who won gold bracelets is as follows:

Professional Players (14): Jake Cody, Cheech Barbaro, Eugene Katchalov, Allen Bari, Harrison Wilder, Matt Perrins, Sean Getzwiller, Viacheslav Zhukov, David Diaz, Andrew Badecker, Tyler Bonkowski, Brian Rast, John Juanda, Aaron Steury

Semi-Pros (2): Sean R. Drake, Amir Lehavot

Amateurs (1): Geoffrey Klein

Five of the 17 winners at this year's WSOP also enjoyed their first-ever cash with their victories.

Every WSOP over the past 11 years has included at least one multiple gold bracelet champion (wins within the same year). 1999 was the last year the WSOP was comprised exclusively of single-event winners. The record for most multiple gold bracelet winners in a single year was in 2009, when five players managed to win two or more titles. So far, no player has yet won two gold bracelets (this year).

The streak of male WSOP gold bracelet winners has now reached 178 consecutive events. Aside from the annual Ladies Championship, the last female player to win a WSOP tournament open to both sexes was Vanessa Selbst, in 2008. The longest "cold" streak for female players occurred between years 1982 and 1996, when 221 consecutive open events passed without a female champion.

The highest finish by a female player (open events) at this year's WSOP was Maria Ho, who finished second (\$5,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em).

New records set at this year's WSOP (to date):

Biggest Heads-Up tournament prize pool in history (\$3,040,000) – Event #2
Largest live Omaha High-Low Split Tournament in history (925 entries) – Event #3
Largest live Six-Handed tournament in poker history (1,920 entries) – Event #10
Biggest Deuce-to-Seven tournament prize pool in history (\$1,184,400) – Event #16
Largest live \$1,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament in history with single starting day (3,157 entries) – Event #18
Largest consecutive-days starting field sizes in poker history (combined 6,238 entries) – Event #18 and Event #20

Note: Various categories and statistics will be updated with each gold bracelet event as they are completed.

Note: All results are now official and may be reprinted by media. If you are posting these results on a website, we would appreciate providing a link back to: WSOP.com

For official news and the latest updates from the 2011 World Series of Poker, visit: WSOP.com