



## OFFICIAL REPORT



### WHAT A YEAR IT'S BEEN FOR NICK PETRANGELO

28-Year-Old Poker Pro from Massachusetts Wins His First Gold Bracelet and Crosses \$1 Million Mark for the Year in Tournament Winnings, by End of May

Short-Handed Specialist Jason Les Goes Card Dead Late, Finishes as Runner Up

Actor James Woods Makes First WSOP Final Table Appearance, Finishes Seventh

### MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Nick Petrangelo

Birthplace: Massachusetts (USA)

Age: 28

Current Residence: Feeding Hills, MA

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Education: B.A. Economics/ Finance from Skidmore College (New York)

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 11

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 1

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

Best Previous WSOP Finish: 25<sup>th</sup> (2011)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$265,794

Personal Facts: Couldn't find a job after 2008 economic crash, turned to poker, and has been supporting himself by playing ever since

Nick Petrangelo was the most impressive player at the final table in the most recent gold bracelet event at the 2015 World Series of Poker. Moreover, one could make a convincing case he deserved to win. How's that for a bold statement and impartiality?

Well, Petrangelo was a mighty force that wouldn't give up and never went away, despite several serious obstacles to victory. Once heads-up, he endured a bad beat and yet still managed to stage two significant comebacks which resulted in the biggest triumph of his poker career with a victory on the game's grandest stage. Considering the strength of competition he was up against, most notably a short-handed specialist and poker pro named Jason Les, who recently competed against artificial

intelligence computer program that was widely covered in the poker media, this victory had far more meaning than the prestige of the bracelet or the prize money.

Saturday night at the Rio Las Vegas, Petrangelo won his first WSOP-related prize. He came out on top in the \$3,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em Shootout. The 28-year-old poker pro from Feeding Hills, MA collected \$201,812 for first place.

A "Shootout" requires that players outlast their opponents in a series of single-table sessions (similar to a satellite or a sit n' go) which become progressively more challenging. Only the winners of each table session advance in the tournament.

Day One began with the 308 players who signed up. They were divided into 7- and 8-handed tables, and played down to 40 winners. Day Two continued with 40 players each competing 4-handed. Ten winners advanced, which ultimately made up the "unofficial" final table (official final tables are nine-handed).

However one of the most memorable moments of this tournament took place earlier, on Day Two. Although the final table generated most of the drama, just as intriguing a session was the heads-up match which materialized towards the end of the previous sessions, and one in particular between veteran actor James Woods and online poker guru Doug Polk, now widely known (alongside Les, who was the runner up) for defeating the same "Claudico" computer program designed by CMU. Woods defeated Polk, and managed to make his first-ever WSOP final table appearance.

The final table which was beamed worldwide over a live stream and watched on the Main Stage by a standing-room only crowd, lasted about eight hours, with Petrangelo defeating Jason Les heads up, which went back and forth for two hours. When the duel began, both players were about even in chips. However, Petrangelo managed to take a 2 to 1 chip lead at one point, which was wickedly reversed when his pocket kings were snapped off by A-8 in an all-in confrontation, after an ace flopped. Petrangelo was unfazed and was able to reverse that slowly and consistently, at one point taking a 6 to 1 chip lead. Les fought back and doubled up a few times, but Petrangelo ultimately was too much of a force and won the duel.

Classy in victory, Petrangelo acknowledged that aside from catching the ace on one hand and doubling, his opponent less was card dead pretty much during the entire heads-up portion of the finale.

"Winning early on here at the series is great," Petrangelo said afterward. "It creates less pressure. I've been here other years when I ran bad early, and it's hard to play catch up. So, I was really glad to get this out of the way. Hopefully, I can have a great series and see it continue."

Jason Les finished as the runner up. The 29-year-old poker pro from Costa Mesa, CA collected \$124,696 in prize money. Les recently completed in the same challenge known as "Brains versus Artificial Intelligence" with Polk and two other pros, who collectively as a group came out ahead of the computer program. This was Les' best WSOP finish, to date.

Third place went to David Peters, from Toledo, OH. He was the chip leader at one point, but could not hold on to his advantage. Now with 31 WSOP cashes and a WSOP Circuit ring, Peters added another \$91,575 in prize money to his resume.

Jeffrey Griffiths, from Alameda, CA finished in fourth place. The 42-year-old immigration attorney cashed for the fourth time in WSOP played, picking up a nice payout, totaling \$67,788.

Fifth place belonged to Derek Bowers, who cashed for the first time. The 29-year-old poker pro from Alliance, OH scooped \$50,576 in prize money for three days of poker playing.

Andreas Hoivold took sixth place. The Norwegian-born poker player now living in Las Vegas pocketed \$38,039 in his highest finish ever among 15 career cashes here at the series.

The seventh-place finisher was James Woods, best known for appearing in nearly 100 movies over three-decades, including Academy Award nominations, and working with just about everyone who is anyone in Hollywood. A longtime poker player, Woods plays frequently in cash games and tournaments in the Los Angeles area. Although he's cashed five times, this was the deepest run by far he's made at the WSOP. Seventh place paid \$28,832. But for Woods, far more satisfying was excelling in yet another field in the prime of what's been a storied life. After the tournament ended, winner Petrangelo paid Woods, in particular, a major compliment. "I've played with him some and have many friends who see him at Foxwoods all the time," Petrangelo said. "For someone who is probably really busy and involved in things, for a part-timer, he really has a solid game."

Eighth place went to Brian Lemke, from Philadelphia, PA. He missed out on the chance to win gold bracelet number two, after winning the \$5,000 buy-in NLHE event back in 2009. Lemke still managed to pick up \$22,021.

Rounding out the final table was Leo Wolpert, a poker pro and part-time lawyer from Las Vegas, NV. He won the Heads-Up championship gold bracelet back in 2009. Wolpert's cut of the prize pool amounted to \$16,951. This marked his 22nd career cash since 2007.

Among those who also finished in the money were these notables – gold bracelet winner from two years ago, Loni Harwood; Doug Polk from the Carnegie Mellon University heads-up poker challenge; 2001 world poker champion Carlos Mortensen; social media maven and WSOP gold bracelet winner Jason Somerville; and 2009 world poker champion Joe Cada.

This marked the deepest run ever at the WSOP for the latest champion who is from Feeding Hills, MA. It was his 11th cash and best finish, by far, at the series.

Oddly enough, this poker triumph might never have happened had it not been for an odd twist of fate. Petrangelo graduated with a degree in Finance back in 2010 from Skidmore College, a private institution in New York State. He moved to New York City and began searching for a job. Unfortunately, after the economic crash of 18 months earlier, Petrangelo couldn't land a job. No one was hiring.

Out of options, Petrangelo turned to playing poker, which he'd excelled at while in college. He played in many underground games and clubs, and eventually spent more and more time at the tables. Later, he began playing tournaments and has improved steadily each year.

So far, 2015 has been a huge year for Petrangelo, not only with a gold bracelet now, but more than \$1 million in accumulated tournament winnings since the year began, and it's presently only the end of May. Destined for his biggest year in poker ever, one might expect to see and hear more about Petrangelo in the future.

"I couldn't get a job interview back then," Petrangelo said when asked about how he accidentally got involved in poker full time. "Now, I'm doing interviews at the World Series of Poker. That's pretty sweet."

*EVENT DIRECT LINKS:*

For this event's results, visit: <http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1136&tid=14204>

For Nick Petrangelo's player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=55199>

For the Live Reporting Log for this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1136&tid=14204>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1136&tid=14204>

For official winner photo, please visit: <http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14204-winner-photo.jpg>

For the live stream archive of this event, please visit: <http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=4>

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

Written by Nolan Dalla (WSOP Media Staff)