



## 2015 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

### **CORD GARCIA WINS COLOSSUS**

Garcia wins \$638,880 for winning the largest poker tournament of all time.

### **MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION**

Name: Cord Garcia

Age: 25

Current Residence: Houston

Marital Status: Single

Children: 0

Profession: Poker Pro

Number of WSOP Cashes: 1 (today)

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 1 (today)

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

Best Previous WSOP Finish: N/A

Total WSOP Earnings: \$638,880

Cord Garcia won the latest event at the 2015 World Series of Poker, and it was one for the record books. The Houston native had a career day, earning \$638,880 dollars in the biggest live tournament of all time. Remarkably, this is the first WSOP cash of Garcia's career, and he sure made it one to remember for the family and friends that lined the gallery around the final table.

Garcia has come a long way in his relatively short career. He started playing in underground games in the Houston area before he was old enough to play legally, then starting grinding the mid-stakes tournament circuit when he turned 21. Now, as a 25-year old, he's won a record-setting tournament, and one event he more than doubled his career tournament earnings.

"Definitely" Garcia said when asked if this is breakthrough moment. "It feels like it is my breakthrough, but at the same time, I feel like I am capable of doing bigger things."

It's hard to get much bigger in poker, though. For about seven weeks every summer, the convention rooms at the Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino take on a carnival-like atmosphere as tens of thousands of poker players from across the globe descend like a swarm of locusts on the world's largest temporary poker room. But on Friday, May 29, the fevered pitch of the WSOP carnival reached unprecedented levels as this new tournament made poker history. The hallways were overcrowded, the poker tables were filled to capacity, and line for tournament registration was longer than anyone could remember. Several players compared it to waiting in line for a roller coaster at an amusement park: hours of anticipation for a (hopefully) unforgettable experience.

The Colossus is a new addition to the WSOP schedule—it featured a buy-in of \$565, the lowest for an open event at the World Series in over three decades. There were also four starting flights (two on Friday and two on Saturday), and if players were eliminated, they were able to re-enter in a later flight.

More importantly, it carried a guaranteed prize pool of \$5,000,000. It would take 10,000 just entries to meet the guarantee. Yet before this event, the largest live tournament ever held had only 8,773 entries (this was the 2006 WSOP Main Event). The Colossus would have to be the biggest poker tournament ever – in terms of number of entries – just to meet the guarantee. It turned out that wasn't a problem, and it wasn't even close. Over the course of four starting flights, 22,374 entries participated. It broke the record for biggest live poker tournament ever by more than 150%, and the total prize pool was \$11,187,000—more than double the advertised guarantee. The number of entrants absolutely demolished the previous record for biggest tournament. So much so that Nolan Dalla, longtime poker writer and unofficial WSOP historian, compared the new mark to Cal Ripken breaking Lou Gehrig's record for consecutive games, Barry Bonds eclipsing Hank Aaron for career home runs, and Joe DiMaggio setting the record for consecutive games with a hit.

Garcia defeated Brad McFarland heads up. It was a career day for McFarland, too. McFarland is an online poker specialist, and before today his best live cash was only \$30,000. Today he won more than ten times that amount. Garcia and McFarland seemed destined to play heads up after Garcia won a three-way all in hand with only four players remaining. He eliminated fourth place finisher Paul Lentz, and left eventual third place finisher Ray Henson short-stacked.

The atmosphere on the ESPN Main Stage was tense as play began on Wednesday. The difference between a ninth-place finish and victory represented over \$570,000. Even so, action got off to a fast start, and spectators saw the first final table-elimination on just the sixth hand of the day. Anthony Blanda, who started the day in eighth place, moved all in with , and Brad McFarland called with pocket sixes. The board missed both players, and Blanda was eliminated in ninth place for \$67,681. This is just the fourth WSOP cash of Blanda's career, and it's by far the biggest. Before today, he had about \$8,000 in live tournament earnings, and he won more than eight times that total in this event.

Blanda wasn't alone in having a career day. With only one exception (Ray Henson), all the final tablists had the best live tournament cash of their careers.

Many of the faces at the final table were familiar to anyone who keeps a close watch on the World Series of Poker Circuit and other mid-stakes tournament series. Third-place finisher Ray Henson has four WSOP Circuit rings on his poker resume, and he's no stranger to tournaments with massive fields. He won the biggest event in WSOP Circuit history, the \$365 re-entry event at Choctaw, Durant this past January. A total of 4,053 entries participated in that event, a massive field by virtually any standard...unless it's being compared the Colossus. It would have seemed fitting for Henson to win today, making him the champion of both the largest event in WSOP history and the largest event in WSOP Circuit history. However, he fell just short with his third-place finish. Even so, he now holds a unique record, having bested 26,423 opponents in only two events. Given the rarity of poker tournaments this big, it's a record unlikely to be broken soon.

Henson first caught the attention of the poker world in 2007, when he made a deep run in the WSOP Main Event. He just barely missed the final table, finishing in 12th place for nearly \$500,000, the only score of his career bigger than the \$308,761 he earned for his performance in the Colossus.

Remarkably, one of Henson's best friends was sitting across from him at this final table: the eventual winner Cord Garcia. Garcia had a WSOP Circuit ring of his own and 15 Circuit cashes. However, this is Garcia's first cash at World Series, and he made it a good one. Garcia and Henson are actually rooming together for the WSOP, and just a week after the 2015 World Series began, they've set a high standard for the summer's most successful poker house.

Cord credits his burgeoning friendship with Henson - as well as their other friends in the game - with helping him improve his game and achieve this breakthrough performance. "Over the last year and half, Ray and I have gotten a lot closer," Garcia said "I was grinding in Houston in the underground scene when I was underage, as early as 15. I knew Ray back then, but that was the year he ran deep in the Main Event, so he was kind of big time. He was someone I looked up to but I didn't really know. Maybe if I was lucky I'd run into him and maybe talk to him. The last year and a half, though Ray and David Baker [ODB], I've gotten a lot closer with, and there's a lot to learn from them."

And then there's Aditya Prasetyo ("Adi," to his friends). Prasetyo entered this final table with over \$500,000 in career earnings, 8 WSOP cashes, and 2 WSOP Circuit rings. His best live cash was about \$125,000. Prasetyo entered today with the chip lead, and extended that lead during the first few hours of play at the final table. At one point with six players remaining, he held almost half the chips in play. But a few hands went against him, and he ended up finishing in sixth place for \$140,956.

Much like Garcia and Henson, Prasetyo is rooming for the summer with a fellow grinder who made a deep run. His roommate is Valentin Vornicu, a six-time WSOP Circuit ring winner who finished in 96th place (\$9,307) in the Colossus.

The lone non-American at the final table was Kenny Hallaert, from Belgium. Hallaert had one of the final table's most vocal cheering sections, a throng of Belgian and Dutch players and fans that included 2014 November Niner Jorjyt van Hoof. Hallaert is familiar with major poker tournaments, as he works as a tournament director as well as playing the game. His deep run today was cut short when his pocket tens were outdrawn by Ray Henson's pocket fours.

Seventh-place finisher Garry Simms, from Shelbyville, Ky. has a Circuit ring of his own, and before today, that \$38,000 victory was the best result of his career. Now the 30-year old who learned to play poker from his father has a six-figure score (\$109,632) in the biggest tournament in WSOP history.

David Farber finished in eighth place (\$87,817). Farber, a 36-year old father of two, has two previous WSOP cashes, although this is his first since 2009. And like everyone else at the final table, this is the biggest live tournament cash of his career.

At 10 a.m. on Friday, 5,173 players took their seats in the first starting flight. After eleven levels of play, only 804 survived. Later that day, at 6 p.m., another 5,029 entries started playing. Then on Saturday, the 10 a.m. flight drew 6,283 players, and the 6 p.m. flight drew 5,889.

In total, 3,448 players survived their Day 1 flights and returned on Sunday for Day 2. This was the day the money bubble burst. It was a scene unlike any other in WSOP history, as nearly 2,500 players in the same event crowded into the Pavilion room at the Rio, just a few minutes away from making the money. Tournament staff stopped play with 2,246 players remaining to start hand-for-hand play at over 200 tables. On the first hand, there were nine simultaneous eliminations. The nine players eliminated on the bubble split the bottom four pay-spots, and all remaining players were guaranteed a payout of at least \$1,096. By the end of Day 2, only 506 players remained.

Day 3 (Monday) saw the elimination of most of the rest of the field, as only 39 players made it to Day 4. A plethora of well-known players made deep runs in this event, and Day 3 saw the eventual eliminations of November Niner John Racener in 54th (\$19,566), Will Givens in 58th (\$16,702), Zo Karim in 60th (\$16,702), Yuval Bronshtein in 64th (\$14,330), Jessica Dawley in 68th (\$14,330), Valentin Vornicu in 96th (\$9,307), Dan O'Brien in 108th (\$8,155), Lee Watkinson in 57th (\$8,155) and Jeff Gross in 180th (\$8,155).

And on Day 4 (Tuesday), Cauffman Talley (17th place, \$38,639) and Mike Leah (39th, \$23,022) were eliminated as the 39 remaining players were whittled down to the official final table of nine.

### **Colossus by the Numbers**

The 22,374 entries include 14,284 unique players. They came from 98 countries, a WSOP record for a single event. There were 5,664 players (39.6% of unique entrants) who had never before played in a WSOP event.

The players' ages span over 75 years. The oldest player in the event was Norman Spivock (96 years, 2 months). At the other end of the spectrum, the youngest players were David Barclay and Noah Goldman, both of whom were 21 years and 1 day old when the tournament began. The average age of all participants is 41.95 years.

From May 28 to June 3, the event used 362,425 physical poker chips, 982 dealers, and 4,480 decks of cards.

Here are the final table results from the Colossus:

1. Cord Garcia - \$638,880
2. Brad McFarland - \$386,253
3. Ray Henson - \$308,761
4. Paul Lentz- \$234,927
5. Kenny Hallaert - \$182,348
6. Adi Prasetyo - \$140,956
7. Garry Simms - \$109,632
8. David Farber - \$87,817
9. Anthony Blanda - \$67,681

### **EVENT DIRECT LINKS:**

For this event's results, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1136&tid=14205>

For Tuan Le's official player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerProfile.asp?playerID=135751>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1136&tid=14205>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1136&tid=14205>

For official winner photo, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14205-winner-photo.jpg>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/>

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

*Written by Robert Kirschen (WSOP Digital Content Manager)*