



2015 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

ARASH GHANEIAN RIDES AWAY WITH A GOLD BRACELET IN HORSE

Las Vegas Poker Pro Cheered to Victory by Wife, Soon Expecting Twins

Australian Rob Campbell Denied Chance to become first Aussie Champ of 2015, Finishes Second

MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Arash Ghaneian
Birthplace: Tehran (Iran)
Age: 40
Current Residence: Henderson, NV (USA)
Marital Status: Married
Children: 2
Profession: Professional Poker Player
Number of WSOP Cashes: 10
Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 1
Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories: 1
Best Previous WSOP Finish: 8th (2005)
Total WSOP Earnings: \$322,641

[Note: Results above reflect the completion of this tournament]

Arash Ghaneian is the most recent gold bracelet winner at the 2015 World Series of Poker. But that wasn't the most important thing on his mind on this day of celebration.

His wife, who is expecting delivery of twins soon, cheered her husband from the gallery. As Ghaneian played his hands and faced increasingly tough decisions each step of the way, he looked over at her and remembered not just who and what he was playing for

exactly, but how much love and trust he'd received from his wife of more than ten years during all the ups and downs that the game of poker can deliver.

"It's been a hard road," Ghaneian said afterward, choking back tears. "Each time I saw her here or she sent me a text, she would say, 'I know you're going to win this – I can feel it.'"

Those words turned out to be prophetic.

"She'd never said that to be before, not like that," Ghaneian said. "I don't play that many tournaments, so to get that from her made me feel truly blessed."

The 40-year-old professional poker player from Henderson, NV came out on top in the \$1,500 buy-in H.O.R.S.E. event, which is a mix of five standard poker games – including Hold'em, Omaha High-Low Split, Razz, Seven-Card Stud, and Eight-or-Better. This was Ghaneian's first WSOP victory, after 11 years of coming to the series held annually at the Rio in Las Vegas.

Ghaneian bested 772 players, which created a prize pool totaling \$1,042,200. The top 80 finishers collected prize money, with the Iranian-born poker player of Armenian ancestry carting off the greatest share of anyone -- \$239,750 for first place. This was Ghaneian's best payday in his ten career cashes.

The win wasn't easy, nor taken for granted, especially in light of so many strong players who went deep. Rob Campbell, from Melbourne, Australia proved to be the toughest opponent of all, coming in second. At one point when Ghaneian and Campbell were heads-up, it appeared the challenger might seize the day. Campbell had Ghaneian on the ropes at one point, but lost a critical hand in the Eight-or-Better round when he was scooped, which foreshadowed the eventual outcome. This was Campbell's second time to cash after a deep run in his debut at WSOP-Asia Pacific in 2013, worth \$148,096 as a consolation prize.

Ghaneian had high words of praise for Campbell's effort and skill. "He's a great heads-up player," Ghaneian said. "He could have won it instead, but the cards just went my way."

When asked about what might have made the difference this time over other occasions he's come close to a breakthrough victory, Ghaneian thought the experience factor was significant. "Those of us who grew up playing these limit games, we understand how it goes. We have been playing these games for 20 years, and when you get down in chips, you can't give up. Things can turn around in just one hand."

Aside from being close to the felt at the final table a few times, Ghaneian faced short-stacked disadvantages on Day Two and Day Three. He had only a few big blinds on two occasions, but both times managed to chip up and get back into contention. No doubt, he drew upon years of experience and refused to give up and put his money in bad, just because he was low on chips.

David Levi, from Las Vegas, finished in 3rd place. He's a longtime tournament veteran of more than 20 years, who just missed out on what would have been his long overdue first WSOP victory. Also cresting the final table was gold bracelet winner Mike Wattel, from Phoenix, who finished 9th.

Other notable players who cashed in this event aside from those who made the final table included – Brandon Cantu (13th), Ted Forrest (18th), Phil Hellmuth (31st), Dan Kelly (38th), Steve Billirakis (40th), Berry Johnston (50th), Jonathan Duhamel (54th), Chris Bjorin (57th), Ylon Schwartz (58th), Cyndy Violette (62nd), Matt Grapenthein (66th), David Chiu (68th), and James Van Alstyne (80th).

Tom McCormick, a.k.a. "The Shamrock Kid" finished in 35th place. This marked his 50th time to cash at the WSOP. That ranks second all-time behind Tony "Top Cat" Cousineau among players with most in-the-money finishes without a win. Speaking of Tony Cousineau, he cashed as well, finishing 79th. That's his third cash this year and 71st overall in his "bracelet-less" career.

Also of note was Phil Hellmuth's 31st-place finish, which was the 110th cash for his illustrious 27-year poker career. He's not only the all-time gold bracelet wins leader, but also has made more final table appearances than anyone in WSOP history (at 52), as well as the most in-the-money finishes (at 110, and counting).

The tournament lasted four days instead of the originally-schedule three, and concluded on a Saturday afternoon in front of a sizable crowd and a live-stream of the competition shown on WSOP.com.

Falling below Ghaneian atop of the final standings, the official order of finish was as follows:

Second Place: Rob Campbell put up a strong fight, coming in second, his best WSOP showing. Campbell's only previous series in-the-money finish was in his hometown of Melbourne two years ago, at WSOP-Asia Pacific. Campbell collected \$148,096.

Third Place: David Levi seems to have been around the poker scene forever. His first cash was back in 2001, and he's posted 38 in-the-money finishes since then. However, for all his accolades, Levi has yet to win poker's top prize. The six-figure score (\$100,676) puts him close to \$700,000 in career earnings. Levi, now residing in Las Vegas, is a native of Israel.

Fourth Place: Ronald Schiffman, from the Philadelphia suburbs enjoyed his best WSOP finish to date by taking 4th. This was his second time to final table this event. Schiffman finished 8th in HORSE back in 2009. He pocketed \$70,067.

Fifth Place: Michael Trivett, a poker dealer from Johnson City, TN finished 5th. He also final tabled the Casino Employees event back in 2013, finishing 8th.

Sixth Place: Mike Watson, from Toronto, Ontario (Canada) has posted some very impressive results at the series, but still remains without a win. He's earned more than \$1 million in his 33 cashes.

Seventh Place: Jonathan Pineda, from Miami, FL cashed for the second time this year, following an in-the-money finish in the Millionaire Maker.

Eighth Place: Jeffrey Mitseff, from Portland, OR may only have two cashes at the WSOP, but they are both 8th-place finishes. Two final table appearances will be something Mitseff hopes to build on next time he makes the money at the WSOP.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS:

Gold bracelet winners who cashed in this event included – Mike Wattel (9th), Brandon Cantu (13th), Ted Forrest (18th), Phil Hellmuth (31st), Dan Kelly (38th), Steve Billirakis (40th), Berry Johnston (50th), Jonathan Duhamel (54th), Chris Bjorin (57th), Ylon Schwartz (58th), Cyndy Violette (62nd), Matt Grapenthein (66th), David Chiu (68th), and James Van Alstyne (80th).

Phil Hellmuth's cash in this event gives him 109 for his career, the most of any player in WSOP history.

FUN FACTS:

Gender breakdown: There were 733 males and 39 females who entered this event.

Average age of participants was 44 years, likely to be the oldest among participants of any event(s) this year, other than the two seniors' championships. The average age for WSOP players is about 34 years, making this group about ten years older, overall.

EVENT DIRECT LINKS:

For this event's results, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1136&tid=14224>

For Arash Ghaneian's official player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=3888>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1136&tid=14224>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1136&tid=14224>

For official winner photo, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14224-winner-photo.jpg>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=24>

(Note: Will appear 48 hours after event concludes)

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