



## 2015 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

**EVENT #41:** \$10,000 buy-in Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split World Championship

**ENTRIES:** 111

**PRIZE POOL:** \$1,043,400

**FIRST PLACE PRIZE:** \$292,158

**PLACES PAID:** 16

### **Max Pescatori Wins Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split World Championship**

Italian Poker Pro Collects His Fourth Career WSOP Gold Bracelet and Second of the 2015 WSOP

Milan-Born Card Sharp Tops Tough Final Table with Stephen Chidwick, Daniel Negreanu, Gary Benson, Others.

50<sup>th</sup> Cash of Career of WSOP a Memorable Occasion for Pescatori

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

Name: Max Pescatori

Birthplace: Milan, Italy

Age: 44

Current Residence: Las Vegas, NV (USA)

Marital Status: Single  
Children: None  
Profession: Poker Pro  
Number of WSOP Cashes: 50  
Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 9  
Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories (with this tournament): 4 (2006, 2008, 2015, 2015)  
Best Previous WSOP Finish: 1st (2006, 2008, 2015))  
Total WSOP Earnings: \$2,174,892  
Personal Facts: Known by his nickname as “the Italian Pirate,” his last name actually translates into “fisherman”

*[Note: All statistics above include the results of this tournament]*

Max Pescatori has done it yet again. The famed poker promoter, player, and personality affectionately known to many as “the Italian Pirate” reeled in another huge catch, winning his second gold bracelet at the 2015 World Series of Poker.

Pescatori blistered a star-studded final table in the \$10,000 buy-in Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split World Championship, which is the highest buy-in tournament for this game played annually anywhere in the world. The Milan-born poker pro topped a tough field of experienced pros and even a few legends in route to what was unquestionably one of the greatest victories of his career, besting 111 players on the way to added poker immortality and a \$292,158 payday.

“I believed I could do it, because Stud is my best game,” Pescatori said afterward in a post-tournament interview. “Coming into the series, I thought this event was my best shot to win another gold bracelet. The win in Razz (gold bracelet number three) wasn’t the event I necessarily thought was my best chance, so that was nice to get it there. But I always thought Stud was the game where I could go deep. I even spent a lot of time beforehand studying and thinking more about the game.”

Pescatori ripped through a final table lineup that included Daniel Negreanu shooting for what would have been the seventh gold bracelet victory of his career. Negreanu, never one to mince words, even *Tweeted* at one point he felt confident this would be his lucky seventh. Pescatori apparently isn’t a Negreanu follower and didn’t see the Tweet.

Fresh off his third gold bracelet victory just two weeks earlier in the \$1,500 buy-in Razz event, Pescatori added to his legendary status in Europe as most successful Italian poker player in history, which made for yet another memorable victory at the 2015 WSOP.

The win was even sweeter given Pescatori's seemingly hopeless condition at one point when play was down to 4-handed. Pescatori was reduced to just three big bets at one stage and appeared destined for a respectable fourth-place finish. However, he managed to not only survive but double- and triple-up to the point where he was back in contention. After two more eliminations, heads-up play began with longtime poker journeyman Stephen Chidwick, from England holding a 3 to 2 chip advantage, with quite deep limits. That gave Pescatori lots of breathing room. In fact, Chidwick ended up suffocating over the final 30 minutes of the tournament, seemingly helpless to stop Pescatori in a quest for his fourth win.

"This is a streaky game," Pescatori said. "You need some luck, of course. But if you can hang in there and then catch some cards, if you are determined you can make up a lot of ground in just a few hands. That's what happened."

Meanwhile, if poker has a proverbial radar, Stephen Chidwick has been both under it and far above it. The average poker fan likely doesn't know nor have any knowledge of the professional poker player from England. However, poker insiders and those who have been attached to the game over the past decade not only know of Chidwick's extraordinary talent, but realize he's one of the game's very best all-around players. When discussions come up about the best poker players not to have won a gold bracelet at the World Series of Poker, Chidwick's name often gets mentioned. Unfortunately for him, that discussion will continue as Chidwick came very close but short, yet again.

Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split is often considered a purists game. It's generally favored by more experienced players and is often associated with finesse, rather than aggression.

Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split was the first "split" game ever to be played at the WSOP, when it was first introduced 37 years ago. In 1976, Doc Green became the first Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split World Champion. Interestingly, he won \$12,750 for first place that year, which is less than half what the bottom of the payout scale (16th place) earned in this year's event.

Since 1976, the list of event winners reads like a "Who's Who" of poker. Past winners include Johnny Moss, Doyle Brunson, Chip Reese, Mickey Appleman, Phil Ivey, John Juanda, Max Stern, Men "the Master" Nguyen, Mike Sexton, Artie Cobb, Vince Burgio, Cyndy Violette, Rich Korbin, Eli Elezra, Jeffrey Lisandro, and Frank Kassela.

Max Pescatori's name now gets etched into the granite list of greats.

With this victory, Pescatori joined Brian Hastings as the other two-time winner at the 2015 WSOP. Hastings won his second gold bracelet victory just a day earlier. He's also the 13th repeat winner in 40 completed events, so far.

Pescatori also moves into serious contention in the 2015 WSOP "Player of the Year" race. The contest appeared to be a two-player race between Hastings and Paul Volpe.

However, the Italian poker pro now living in Las Vegas most of the time rockets himself close to the top of the leaderboard and is now a player to watch and enjoy the remainder of the series.

Not only does Max Pescatoru now have four gold bracelets – won in 2006, 2008, and two in 2015, he also crosses the \$2 million mark in career WSOP earnings.

Perhaps just as impressive, Pescatori has never finished 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> in a WSOP event before. All four times he got into a three-handed confrontation, he ended up with the victory.

“I think I might be the only player in WSOP history who is a perfect 4-0 at three handed.”

A quick fact check reveals that to be correct, except for Bill Boyd, the legendary Five-Card Draw master from the 1970s, who was also a perfect 4-0 and never finished in any other spot than first place.

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There were three former gold bracelet winners among the final eight players – Daniel Negreanu (6 wins), Max Pescatori (3 wins coming in), and Gary Benson (1 win). Following Pescatori’s finish in the top spot, the descending order of results was as follows:

**Second Place:** With this runner-up finish, British poker pro Stephen Chidwick now has 33 cashes at the WSOP, including 9 final table appearances, and more than \$1.5 million in winnings. Prior to this showing, his highest finish at the WSOP had been a 3<sup>rd</sup>-place finish in 2012. Second place paid out \$180,529.

**Third Place:** Daniel Negreanu, originally from Toronto, Ontario (Canada) and now residing in Las Vegas, NV finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, which paid \$113,062. This was his best showing since last year’s Big One for One Drop runner-up finish, which was the biggest financial score of Negreanu’s illustrious career in poker (\$8.2 million). The 6-time gold bracelet winner was denied a chance to reach the plateau of seven wins or more shared by only 8 players in history. The Poker Hall of Famer (Class of 2014) ran cold at three handed and had to settle for what was his first final table appearance of this year’s series. Benson was an original inductee into the Australian Poker Hall of Fame.

**Fourth Place:** Aleksandr Denisov, from Moscow, Russia finished 4<sup>th</sup> in what was his second final table appearance this year. He took 6<sup>th</sup> place in the \$1,500 buy-in Deuce-to-Seven Lowball tourney. This was also his fourth cash overall at the 2015 WSOP. His payout amounted to \$81,865.

**Fifth Place:** Gary Benson, a 57-year-old poker player from Sydney, Australia and longtime veteran of the WSOP was the first Aussie to win a gold bracelet, back in 1996. The professional gambler and businessman has since cashed 18 times since that debut victory. Benson came close to a second win but couldn’t quite leap into contention against some very stiff and experience competition. He earned \$63,981 for 5<sup>th</sup> place.

An amusing side note -- when Benson was asked during an interview how and where he learned to play poker, he answered, "the hard way of course, by losing my money."

**Sixth Place:** Thomas Butzhammer, from Vienna, Austria finished 6<sup>th</sup>. He collected \$51,022. Remarkably, this was his sixth time to cash at this summer series, and 11<sup>th</sup> in-the-money finish within the last three years.

**Seventh Place:** Richard Sklar has been enjoying a couple of successful years at the WSOP. The longtime professional gambler and golf hustler from Las Vegas just made his third final table appearance in two years (3<sup>rd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and now 7<sup>th</sup>). He earned \$41,433 for another fine effort. Side Note and True Story: Sklar bought President Barack Obama into the 2009 WSOP Main Event. However, the President must have had other obligations and didn't show up for the free seat.

**Eighth Place:** Alan Ledford, a professor from Wilmington, OH rounded out the final table as the 8<sup>th</sup>-place finisher. He collected 34,192 in prize money. This marked his first time to cash in a WSOP event.

#### **OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS:**

Aside from the final table finishers, other *notable* gold bracelet winning players who cashed included – Phillip Hui (10<sup>th</sup>), Mark Leah (14<sup>th</sup>), Huck Seed (15<sup>th</sup>), and Phil Galfond (16<sup>th</sup>).

#### **FUN FACTS:**

In 1986, this game was inexplicably omitted from the WSOP schedule. After some protest by Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split enthusiasts, it was reinstated and has been included on the poker menu every year. Since 1995, every WSOP has included at least two Eight-or-Better events.

No player in WSOP history has ever won more than one gold bracelet in this game.

#### **EVENT DIRECT LINKS:**

For this event's results, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1136&tid=14241>

For Max Pescatori's official player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=148>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1136&tid=14241>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1136&tid=14241>

For official winner photo, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14241-winner-photo.jpg>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=41>

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

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