



2015 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

EVENT #47: \$2,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em

ENTRIES: 1,244

PRIZE POOL: \$2,830,100

FIRST PLACE PRIZE: \$551,941

PLACES PAID: 144

DATES: June 23-26, 2015

Matt O'Donnell Outlasts His Rivals and Wins First WSOP Gold Bracelet,

Heads-Up Match Between New Poker Champ Matt O'Donnell and Runner-Up Timur Margolin Lasts Five Hours

Tampa-Based Poker Player Wins \$551,941 following a Second-Place Finish at Last Year's Series

MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Matt O'Donnell
Birthplace: Vihannes, IN (USA)
Age: 27
Current Residence: Tampa, FL
Marital Status: Single
Children: None
Profession: Professional Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 5

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 3

Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories: 1

Best Previous WSOP Finish: 2nd Place (2014)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$889,773

Personal Facts: This was O'Donnell's third top-five finish at the WSOP in the last two years

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

Matt O'Donnell proved that tenacity might be poker's most important virtue. He not only staged multiple comebacks during a grueling heads-up match that lasted several hours versus an equally-fiery opponent, he was also determined not to depart the final table in disappointing fashion as happened in a similar situation one year ago when he came in second place here at the annual summer classic in Las Vegas.

As a result of his tenacity, the poker pro from Tampa, Florida is now the latest gold bracelet winner at the 2015 World Series of Poker.

Indeed, after finishing as runner up in the \$10,000 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha Championship at last year's WSOP, O'Donnell returned again to poker's premier stage, hoping to reach a career summit. He achieved that on a Friday evening in a tournament that ran so long that an unscheduled fourth playing day was added, which then ran an unexpectedly long seven hours. O'Donnell celebrated his victory after winning the final hand in which his opponent Timur Margolin, from Israel, lost a race holding a pair of sixes versus two overcards. The duel was a brutal test for both players that even became contentious, at times.

"It was definitely a heated atmosphere when we were heads up," O'Donnell said afterward. "The rail was very aggressive, they were speaking in a foreign language, and we were going back and forth a lot. I was just glad to win."

Not to be upstaged by the players, the rail of supporters rooting for both finalists made this into a real battle. Players and spectators openly traded verbal barbs back and forth, as the pattern of play at the table mimicked what was happening in the stands.

The \$2,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament was the 47th of 68 gold bracelet events on the schedule. The competition attracted 1,244 entries, generating a \$2,830,100 prize pool.

O'Donnell's share for winning amounted to a whopping \$551,941. With this victory, he now has 5 WSOP cashes and has accumulated nearly \$900,000 in WSOP winnings alone. He not only took 2nd place in an event last year, he also took 5th place in another, which means he's now posted three super-deep runs since the start of the 2014 series.

Margolin made things mighty interesting during the heads-up match eventually won by O'Donnell. He began play at a significant chip disadvantage, as Day Four seemed to belong entirely to the Floridian when players dropped from five down to two. However, the outcome became a wide open question when Margolin was all in on the first of several head-to-head confrontations and made trip jacks on a big hand as O'Donnell missed a flush draw. That put the two rivals close in chips. That would be just the start of several races and chip lead changes that had everyone on the ropes for hours.

Both players traded the chip lead multiple times, as races and coin flips flip-flopped the fates of both players, which changed by the hour. Finally at about 7 at night, Margolin's pair of sixes couldn't withstand O'Donnell's queen-jack when the final board ran out A-A-Q-Q-X, giving O'Donnell a full house and the victory.

"Hopefully, this is the first of many gold bracelets," O'Donnell said afterward. "Winning the gold bracelet is exciting. But the money is pretty sweet, too."

When asked about finishing first this time versus second place last year O'Donnell thought the experience of previous disappointment served him well.

"When I had the chip lead last year, I was outside and was hearing – 'the bracelet is yours, you're going to win it,'" O'Donnell recalled. "I'd been here before but that way of thinking wasn't going to happen this time. I didn't get excited until after I won. Thankfully, I closed it out this time."

At the final table, O'Donnell wore an unusual shirt, with a huge llama (animal print) emblazoned on the front. He called it his "lucky shirt," that was given to him by a friend.

"I told my friend that if I get to the final table again, I would wear this shirt. Now, I guess I have to wear it every time. I can't wash it now. That would be bad luck."

The final table included at least two notable players who are widely known in the poker world. Gold Bracelet winner Andre Akkari, the second ever to win a WSOP title from the nation for Brazil, came in 8th place. Akkari was hoping to carry over some of the Brazilian energy that has turned the 2015 WSOP a celebratory atmosphere. However, he busted out fairly early from the final table.

Andrew Black, a.k.a. "The Monk" lasted considerably longer before exiting in 4th place. The Dublin-based mystic was hoping for his long-awaited first WSOP victory, but will have to wait a bit longer. Black is perhaps best known for finishing 5th in the 2005 World Championship won by Joe Hachem that same year.

Following O'Donnell's finish in the top spot, the descending order of results was as follows:

Second Place: Timur Margolin, a 37-year-old professional poker player, almost became the third Israeli citizen this year to win one of poker's most prestigious titles. He hoped to join his fellow countrymen Idan Raviv and Eli Elezra (who now lives in the

U.S.), both who won events in 2015. Earlier, Raviv topped the \$1,500 buy-in Six-Max tourney completed on June 6th. Then, Elezra won the \$1,500 buy-in Seven-Card Stud title, which was settled the previous day on June 25th. With Margolin's runner up finish as well as a third-place finish by another player in an earlier event, this marks the most successful year in history at the WSOP for players from Israel. Margolin's share of the prize money came to \$341,338. With this performance, he now has 3 WSOP cashes. His best previous showing was bubbling the final table of an event last year (10th place in a \$5K NLHE competition).

Third Place: Brandon Wittmeyer, from Las Vegas took 3rd place, which paid \$215,964. This was the third time to cash at the WSOP for the native of Chicago.

Fourth Place: Andy Black, a.k.a. "The Monk", had his best financial bonanza in ten years at the series with his 4th-place finish, which paid \$215,964. The Irish poker pro from Dublin now has 18 cashes at the series and crossed the \$2 million mark in prize winnings with this effort.

Fifth Place: Andrew Dean, from Feeding Hills, MA cashed for the eighth time at the WSOP, which paid \$115,637 for 5th place.

Sixth Place: Jeff Gross, from Ann Arbor, MI finished 6th and collected \$86,601. This was his fifth time to make a final table and 22nd time to cash at the series. He now has close to \$900,000 in WSOP earnings. Gross came in 2nd in an event back in 2011.

Seventh Place: Rick Alvarado, from Ontario, CA finished 7th. He earned \$65,799. This was his sixth time to cash at the WSOP.

Eighth Place: Andre Akkari enjoyed his deepest run at the series since his gold bracelet victory back in 2011. The Sao Paulo poker pro and ambassador for the game in Brazil ended up with \$50,658.

Ninth Place: Raghav Bansal would have been the first WSOP gold bracelet winner from India had he been victorious. Instead, he rounded out the final table as the 9th-place finisher. The New Dehli visitor ended up making \$39,508.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS:

Aside from the final table finishers, other gold bracelet winning players who cashed included – Phil Hellmuth (16th), Barry Shulman (19th), Blair Rodman (26th), Carlos Mortensen (35th), Gary Gibbs (44th), Fabrice Soulier (51st), Justin Oliver (64th), Joe Cada (79th), Steve Gross (103rd), Will Durkee (108th), Chris Dromrowski (123rd), and Calvin Anderson (144th).

With his cash in this event, Phil Hellmuth added to his status as the all-time leader among in-the-money finishers, now with 112 on his WSOP resume.

FUN FACTS:

The gender breakdown of players for this event was 1,209 males and 34 females.

The average age of participants was 36.5 years, with ages ranging from 21 to 84.

There were 53 different nations represented among the players.

EVENT DIRECT LINKS:

For this event's results, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1136&tid=14247>

For Matt O'Donnell's official player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=123088>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1136&tid=14247>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1136&tid=14247>

For official winner photo, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14247-winner-photo.jpg>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=47>

(Note: Will appear 48 hours after event concludes)

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