



2015 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

EVENT #50: \$10,000 buy-in Limit Hold'em

ENTRIES: 117

PRIZE POOL: \$1,099,800

FIRST PLACE PRIZE: \$291,456

PLACES PAID: 18

DATES: June 25-26, 2015

Ben Yu Finally Gets His Gold Bracelet

After Eight Years of Cashes, Prolific Poker Pro Triumphs in Limit Hold'em Championship at 2015 World Series of Poker

Yu Stages a Final Table Comeback and Tops Four Former WSOP Event Winners

MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Ben Yu

Birthplace: Dayton, OH

Age: 29

Current Residence: Las Vegas, NV

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Education: B.A. Civil and Environmental Engineering (Stanford University)
Profession: Professional Poker Player
Number of WSOP Cashes: 30
Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 4
Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories: 1
Best Previous WSOP Finish: 2nd (2010)
Total WSOP Earnings: \$714,310
Personal Facts: Yu quit poker for three years to earn his college degree, then worked on Capitol Hill and lived in Panama for a time before returning to the game full-time

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

This year's \$10,000 buy-in Limit Hold'em World Championship was won by Ben Yu, a.k.a. "BYU" -- from Henderson, NV.

The 50th tournament of 68 gold bracelet events on the 2015 World Series of Poker schedule included a wildly unpredictable turn of events that was quite unusual given the limit betting structure. Yu managed to overcome a huge chip disparity when play was down to three-handed and somehow won what had to be considered an unlikely victory, even given his obvious skill and experience.

"It's really big to win this for me," Yu said in a post-tournament interview. "The most important thing to me since I was 16 was to come here and win a WSOP event. Back in 2003 and 2004, like so many people I saw (Chris) Moneymaker and decided to get into the game. That's when I started dreaming about playing and winning an event at the WSOP."

This was certainly a breakthrough achievement for Yu who has been active in many of the biggest poker events during the last several years and has posted stellar results, although he's been bracelet-less up until now. His closest previous pursuit of a WSOP bracelet took place in 2010 when he finished second in an event.

"Even though I finished second place then, that wasn't a bad thing for me," Yu recalled. "My bankroll was like a thousand dollars at the time, so to come in second, it gave me like a five-figure bankroll and a lot of confidence to play more events."

After that, Yu's poker career took off. At 14 cashes since the start of the 2014 series, he's one of the most consistent performers at the WSOP during that span. Yu now has six cashes in 2015 alone, including the long-awaited gold bracelet.

The 117 entries wasn't the biggest field at this year's series, but it was certainly one of the toughest. The prize pool amounted to \$1,099,800, which paid out the top 15 finishers. Yu took the bulk of the sum, collecting \$180,114 for the victory.

“It feels really good to play against the best players, and win,” Yu said. “Beating up on weaker players is a better way to make money. But the way to improve is to continually test yourself.”

With all due respect to Yu, no one would have expected him to win, given his low chip stack when play was at three-handed. He was also up against two tough opponents – both former gold bracelet winners. Jesse Martin who finished second, was shooting for a second win after his first win in 2013. Justin Bonomo, who won a title last year, also hoped to repeat, but finished third.

Indeed, Bonomo looked like the player to beat during much of the third and final day of play. He dominated the final table for several hours, holding the majority of chips in play for a while. However, Bonomo went cold at the worst time and couldn’t defeat two very determined opponents who managed to reverse the course of events and knock out Bonomo with three players remaining.

Yu grew up in the Los Angeles area and is a graduate of Stanford University. In fact, he quit the game for three years to pursue his studies. He earned a degree in civil and environmental engineering in 2008. After Yu graduated, he spent time working on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. and then went to live and work in Panama for a time. While he was away from the game, he said he began to miss it. He returned to poker and has been playing full time for the last seven years, even competing in some of the highest buy-in events in the world, including the last two \$50,000 buy-in Poker Player Championships (he barely missed cashing in both).

When asked to explain his success, Yu credits steadily improving and constantly willing to learn more. “When I first started as a player, I played Limit Hold’em,” Yu said. “After that, I started trying to learn and really become good at one more game a year. I chained myself to the idea of learning new games and getting better, adding something new every year.”

Yu now has 47 major cashes overall on his career tournament resume, and more than \$1 million in earnings with this latest triumph.

“It’s not every day you get this close,” Yu said. “You have to make the most of every chance you get. You have to play very well and run well too to win. I’m really fortunate to finally get here.”

Following Yu’s finish in the top spot, the descending order of results was as follows:

Second Place: The champion Ben Yu had high words of praise for the runner-up, Jesse Martin, even going so far to call him a better Limit Hold’em player. Martin, who won his gold bracelet in a \$10K Deuce-to-Seven No-Limit Draw event back in 2013, added \$180,114 to his poker bankroll for this runner-up finish. The Shrewsbury, MA-based poker pro now has 43 career cashes at the WSOP.

Third Place: Gold bracelet winner Justin Bonomo dominated much of the final table, but ran out of energy about 5 hours into play and ended up going out in 3rd place. The 29-year-old poker pro now residing in Vancouver, BC (Canada), who won last year's \$1,500 buy-in Six-Handed NLHE tourney, added another \$130,480 to his poker bankroll. He now has a 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 3rd place finishes since the start of the 2013 WSOP. With this finish, he moved over the \$2 million mark in series lifetime winnings.

Fourth Place: Aleksandr Denisov is having a big WSOP, with five cashes – all of which were top 30. In fact, this was his third final table appearance, after coming in 6th and 4th in two previous events. The poker player from Moscow, Russia collected \$96,309 in what was his sixth time to cash overall.

Fifth Place: This was the third final table appearance at this year's series for Anthony Zinno, who came in 5th. He now has a 7th, a 6th, and a 5th place finish in 2015. This was yet another nice score for the player from Boston, MA – amounting to \$72,377. Zinno has two World Poker Tour (WPT) titles.

Sixth Place: Kenny Shei has been under the radar of a lot of observers and appears to be on the verge of a breakout series in 2015. The Las Vegas semi-pro cashed for the third time at this series and enjoyed his best WSOP score with a \$55,341 payout for 6th place. This marks 17 cashes for Shei at the series, dating back to 2009.

Seventh Place: Gabriel Nassif, from Paris, France is another top player who seems way overdue for a WSOP victory. He came close to victory in Event #15 this year (\$3,000 buy-in Six-Handed Limit Hold'em). However, Nassif ended up finishing second in that tournament. Proving his acumen in Limit Hold'em was no fluke, Nassif made yet another final table appearance in Limit and ended up going out in 7th place.

Eighth Place: Marco Johnson, from Walnut Creek, CA was aiming for a second gold bracelet victory following his previous win two years ago in the Six-Handed Limit Hold'em competition. This marked Johnson's 30th career cash at the series. It was also his ninth final table appearance. In addition to a victory, he's also finished as the runner up two times.

Ninth Place: Terrence Chan, the longtime poker insider and more recently a professional MMA fighter, rounded out the final table as the 9th-place finisher. Chan is widely considered one of the world's best Limit Hold'em specialists, but still remains without a gold bracelet. Chan, from Vancouver, BC (Canada), now has 31 cashes at

the series, including 4 final table appearances just in Limit Hold'em events, with 3rd place being his best showing.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS:

Aside from the final table finishers, other gold bracelet winning players who cashed included – Ian Johns (10th), Sorel Mizzi (16th), and Brock Parker (17th).

FUN FACTS:

There were 114 males and 3 females who entered this event (3.1 percent).

The average age of participants was 38 years, with ages ranging from 21 (youngest) to 68 (oldest).

There were 13 different nations represented among the players.

During the 1990s, WSOP Limit Hold'em tournaments routinely attracted the largest fields of any tournament anywhere in the world. Several years, this tournament had twice number of entrants as the Main Event. It was traditionally offered as the kick-off event over the first weekend of the WSOP.

Limit Hold'em made its debut at the 1983 WSOP. The first Limit Hold'em world champion was Tom McEvoy. He went on to win the Main Event that same year.

The start of Limit Hold'em's popularity can be traced back to California's legalization of flop games (including Texas Hold'em) in 1988. Prior to the late 1980s, Limit Hold'em was spread in only a few small Las Vegas casinos and underground games, located mostly in the American South.

Limit Hold'em was the king of all games during most of the 1990s, except in the Northeastern United States, where Seven-Card Stud was the dominant form of poker. In fact, finding a NoLimit Hold'em game was next to impossible anywhere – except at the most prestigious events such as the WSOP and the Hall of Fame (now defunct). In 2003, things started to change. No-Limit Hold'em quickly became the most popular form of poker played -- not only in the United States but worldwide. Today, Limit Hold'em tournaments are relatively uncommon.

The list of former Limit Hold'em champions at this level is quite an illustrious group. Former Limit Hold'em champions include – Tom McEvoy, Berry Johnston, Humberto

Brenes, Johnny Chan, Mickey Appleman, David Chiu, Jay Heimowitz, Farzad Bonyadi, and others.

EVENT DIRECT LINKS:

For this event's results, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1136&tid=14250>

For Ben Yu's official player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=47780>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1136&tid=14250>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1136&tid=14250>

For official winner photo, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14250-winner-photo.jpg>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=50>

(Note: Will appear 48 hours after event concludes)

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