



## 2016 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

### KYLE JULIUS WINS DEBUT OF TOP UP TURBO EVENT

29-year-old poker pro from Naperville, IL collects \$142,972 prize in Event #4

Turbo tournament with a twist draws 667 entries

Belgium's Bart Lybaert finishes as runner up

Ben Yu, Winner of last year's \$10K Limit Hold'em championship, finishes third

### MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Kyle Julius

Birthplace: Naperville, IL (USA)

Age: 29

Current Residence: Naperville, IL (USA)

Marital Status: Engaged

Children: Baby on Way

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 22

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 2

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

Best Previous WSOP Finish: 2<sup>nd</sup> (2012)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$1,022,848

Personal Facts: First live tournament victory

Kyle Julius is the newest member of poker's gold bracelet club.

Four years after finishing as the runner up in a WSOP gold bracelet event, this time the 29-year-old professional poker player from Naperville, IL won poker's ultimate title. Julius' victory came in the \$1,000 buy-in Top Up No-Limit Hold'em tournament, which was played over a lightning-fast two days and concluded on a Monday afternoon. The final table was played out upon the redesigned ESPN main stage at the Rio in Las Vegas and lasted slightly more than two hours, one of the shortest durations of any event in recent memory. Julius collected \$142,972 in prize money, making this one of the biggest wins of his young poker career. In fact, it marked his first live tournament victory of any kind.

“Actually, this is the first live tournament I’ve ever won, so for it to be a bracelet event is pretty cool,” Julius said in a post-victory interview. “...to start the series off with a win in just the second tournament is obviously what I would want.”

Julius won a well-deserved victory by conquering a final table which included several players who were making their first WSOP final day appearance. The narrowed-down field was led by Ben Yu, who was hoping to add to his jewelry collection following his WSOP debut win in last year’s \$10,000 buy-in Limit Hold’em championship. Yu zig-zagged throughout the final day and ended up finishing in third place.

Once Yu was eliminated, it didn’t take long for the end to come. Julius’ final moment of triumph came when he shocked the crowd by spiking a set of fours on the river. Julius appeared to have Bart Lybaert, from Meihelen, Belgium, on the ropes when the final hand was dealt out, but then looked to be a huge underdog when a king flopped, giving Lybaert top pair. Julius was down to just two outs (two fours in the deck), then watched in delight as his miracle was delivered and a four rained down on the final hand of the tournament, making a set to go along with Julius’ pocket fours. Although disappointed by the final outcome, Lybaert could still take pride in the accomplishment. He finished as the runner up and pocketed \$88,328 for a valiant effort.

Julius knows all too well the mixed emotional reaction to finishing second. At the 2012 WSOP, which was the second series he attended as a player, the relative newcomer finished as the runner up in a \$5,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold’em tourney, which paid out a whopping \$589,687. With this victory, he’s now crossed the million-dollar threshold in WSOP earnings.

This first time tourney of this kind attracted 667 players, which created a prize pool totaling \$681,300. Most participants gave the event a thumbs up, although the rules and structure caused a bit of confusion.

“I think some players looked at the name of the tournament and it scared some players away,” said Julius when asked about the debut event. “I think some people were confused as to what it was, so the turnout could have been bigger if it had been just a \$1K Turbo. But, I think it’s pretty cool that someone can come in and win half their stack online in a \$55 tournament. I think once people learn more about it and know how to go online, I think it will get a better turnout...obviously, I can’t argue with the final result.”

Top Up Turbo No-Limit Hold’em was a new addition to the schedule this year. The “Top Up” feature meant that players had several ways of starting with a double-sized stack. Participants could either qualify online via a \$55 single-table satellite, or a \$55 live-action satellite (played inside the Rio), or pay an additional \$1,000 in entry fee to take the add on chips. 334 players qualified via one of the first two options. However, 81 players paid \$1,000 for the add on, which helped to inflate the prize pool. Julius, the champion, earned his extra starting stack by playing in a live satellite at the Rio.

Although this is far from the biggest prize pool at the WSOP, the victory was extra special for Julius, given the timing. Along with his fiancé, the couple is expecting their first child, expected to be born right after the WSOP summer series is completed in the later part of July.

“We’ve been arguing about names (for the baby), and my fiancé said that if I won a gold bracelet I could pick the name of the baby,” Julius said. “It’s still going to be mutual – we’re going to name the kid together but now I have a little more say.”

Just as Julius was being interviewed, someone listening from the crowd hollered out that the child should be named “Turbo,” which then brought a few laughs.

This was the fourth gold bracelet event on this year's schedule. This leaves 65 major tournaments still to go in what promises to be the biggest and most exciting WSOP ever.

Here's a brief report of the other top finishers who made the final table, which was played over a two-day stretch at the Rio in Las Vegas:

**Second Place:** Bart Lybaert, from Heihelen, Belgium finished as the runner up. This was his fifth time to cash in a WSOP event, and first final table appearance. Like two other players in this event, he also cashed in this year's Colossus event, making him 2/2 in cashed for the series. His payout amounted to \$88,328.

**Third Place:** Ben Yu was one of the most popular winners of the 2015 WSOP and hoped to take down his second gold bracelet. Yu yo-yoed up and down in chips the entire day before exiting in third place, which paid out \$61,137. For Yu, originally from Dayton, OH and now residing in Henderson, NV, this was the 32<sup>nd</sup> career WSOP cash for the Stanford University graduate. He now has five final table appearances, including a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Fourth Place:** Karl Held appeared to be the player to beat for a while. He was in or near the chip lead during the first two hours of play, but then faded and ended up as the fourth-place finisher. Held, from Forest Hills, NY cashed for just the second time in a WSOP event, which paid out \$43,001. Held took a bad beat on his final hand, losing with A-4 suited to Ben Yu's Q-7 suited, which connected to the board and made a flush.

**Fifth Place:** Hugo Perez, who was born in Peru and now lives in Plano, TX, enjoyed his second career WSOP final table appearance, coming in fifth. Perez finished fourth in a Six-Handed event back in 2010. Perez collected \$30,742.

**Sixth Place:** Christian Blech can brag that he's a perfect 2/2 in WSOP events this year. Just a day after cashing in Colossus II, he made his first WSOP final table and took down a very respectable sixth-place finish. Blech, from Germany, was one of only two non-American players among the final nine. He pocketed \$22,345 in prize money.

**Seventh Place:** Nitis Udornpim, from Bethlehem, PA enjoyed his first WSOP cash as the seventh-place finisher. He pocketed \$16,518 in his debut under the bright lights. For the 21-year-old poker player and student born in Thailand, this was the first year he was eligible to play at the WSOP, and he certainly took full advantage of the opportunity.

**Eighth Place:** George Dolofan arrived at the final table as the shortest stack of the nine finalists and was eliminated within the first half hour. The marked his second time to cash at the WSOP, which was good for \$12,422

**Ninth Place:** Vinny Pahuja now has 43 cashes combined between WSOP and WSOP Circuit events. The veteran poker player from Hicksville, NY went out early in the finale and ended up with a \$9,506 payout. The brings his career WSOP earnings up close to \$400,000.

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

Michael Souza, from San Diego, CA, is a four-time WSOP Circuit gold ring winner. He fell short of making the final table and ended up in 16<sup>th</sup> place.

Gold bracelet winner Andy Bloch took 26<sup>th</sup> place, inching closer to crossing the \$3 million mark in career WSOP earnings.

Liv Boree, the popular British player and European Poker Tour champion, came in 29<sup>th</sup>.

Gold bracelet winner David Williams finished 43<sup>rd</sup>. He closed in on the \$4.5 million mark in career WSOP earnings.

Other notables who cashed beyond the top 50 included – Ronnie Bardah, Eric Froehlich, Leo Wolpert, and Matt Matros.

## **FUN FACTS:**

This was the debut of a new event, merging online and live satellites and a gold bracelet tournament. Although entry was open to everyone (over 21), the amount of starting chips was determined by qualification via online satellites held at WSOP.com as well as live-action satellites played at the Rio. Players who finished in one of the top three places in a single-table satellite earned double the normal starting stack (5,000 in chips). However, to level the playing field, all players were offered the opportunity to add on the extra chips by paying an additional \$1,000 in entry fee, which boosted the prize pool by an additional 7 percent overall.

## **EVENT DIRECT LINKS:**

For this event's results, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1232&tid=14904>

For Kyle Julius' official player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=94902>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1232&tid=14904>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1232&tid=14904>

For the official winner photo, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14904-winner-photo.jpg>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=2>

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

*Written by Nolan Dalla (WSOP Media Staff)*