



## 2016 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

### ANKUSH MANDAVIA WINS \$5K BUY-IN TURBO NO-LIMIT HOLD'EM EVENT

Georgia poker pro collects \$548,139 top prize in Event #48

Daniel Strelitz finishes as runner up

14-time gold bracelet winner Phil Hellmuth makes first final table of 2016 WSOP – finishes eighth

Jason Mercier cashes for ninth time as this year's series

### MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Ankush Mandavia

Birthplace: Detroit, MI

Age: 29

Current Residence: Kennesaw, GA

Marital Status: Single

Children: None

Profession: Professional Poker Player (tournament specialist)

Number of WSOP Cashes: 16

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 1

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

Best Previous WSOP Finish: 6<sup>th</sup> (2014)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$796,646

Personal Facts: Graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in economics

Winner's Quote:

*Question: "Is there more of a skill to these turbo tournaments than we tend to give them credit for?"*

*Ankush Mandavia: "I would like to think so."*

Ankush Mandavia is the newest member of poker's gold bracelet club.

The 29-year-old professional poker player from Kennesaw, GA won the \$5,000 buy-in Turbo No-Limit Hold'em tournament, which was played over two days and nights and just concluded at the Rio in Las Vegas.

Mandavia collected \$548,139 in prize money, making this the biggest win of his career. However, he's no newcomer to the tournament scene, having first cashed at the series five years ago. He's now posted 16 in-the-money finishes, two very deep runs, and now a debut victory.

"I've had a lot of deep runs in the past, but until now had never closed the deal," Mandavia said in a post-victory interview. "So, it's really gratifying to win. It feels really good."

The Detroit-born pro won his victory by coming out on top at a final table which included several tough adversaries, including 14-time gold bracelet winner, Phil Hellmuth. However, even the most accomplished players in the game proved no match for Mandavia in this tournament which he seemed to dominate as the finale became shorter handed.

After Christian Niles, from Germany was eliminated in third place, which left Daniel Strelitz and Mandavia neck-and-neck, heads up play for the gold bracelet commenced. The players and spectators braced for what was expected to be a long and tough battle given how deep both players were in chips, relative to the blinds.

However, the highly anticipated duel lasted only about ten minutes.

The ultimate moment of triumph came when Mandavia scooped the final pot of the tournament holding pocket jacks against Strelitz who finished as the runner up. This was Strelitz's best WSOP showing to date, which doubled his previous career WSOP earnings. The consolation prize amounted to \$338,774.

Mandavia is a second-generation Indian-American. He credited his family, being supportive of him in the course of his decision to become a professional poker player, as one of the essential building blocks of his foundation to pursue the unorthodox profession. In fact, his parents visiting Las Vegas from their home in Georgia came to see him play in this tournament.

"I'm really close to my family – my sister and my parents," Mandavia said. "I also have such great friends. Everyone around me is so supportive of what I do."

Mandavia noted that since he's been playing poker full-time, he began switching over to playing more tournaments about three years ago. He had previously played a lot of online poker, which started back while attending college at the University of Georgia, where he obtained a degree in economics in 2009, which seems most appropriate. His online specialty was playing short-handed and heads-up.

Mandavia was cheered to victory by a noisy rail which included several other top young pros.

"It feels amazing to have people supporting you and people believing in you. I just gave it my best, and let it happen, and it just happened to get me a gold bracelet – so I'm happy," Mandavia said.

This tourney attracted 524 entrants which created a prize pool totaling \$2,462,800. The top 79 finishers collected prize money.

Aside from the winner, here's a brief report of the other top finishers who made the final table:

**Second Place:** Daniel Strelitz, a poker pro from Torrance, CA made a noble effort to win the gold bracelet but came up just short. This was his 18<sup>th</sup> time to finish in the money at the series. With this cash, he crossed the \$1 million mark in career earnings at the WSOP. His fourth final table appearance paid out \$338,774, his biggest score, to date.

**Third Place:** Christian Niles, age 35, from Germany caused quite a splash in his WSOP debut, cashing for \$232,934.

**Fourth Place:** Thiago Macedo, from Ponta Grossa, Brazil posted his nation's deepest run at this year's series, coming in fourth. Macedo came close to becoming only the fourth Brazilian ever to win a gold bracelet. Instead, he had to settle for a sizable \$162,924 payout in what was only his third time to cash in a series event.

**Fifth Place:** Pedro Oliveira, from Portugal became this year's deepest run by a player from that European country with this impressive fifth-place finish. Oliveira cashed for only the fourth time, but sure added to his WSOP resume with this \$115,957 payout.

**Sixth Place:** Sean Getzwiller, from Las Vegas, NV came in sixth place. He was seeking a second gold bracelet after winning a WSOP title back in 2011 (\$1,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em). Getzwiller received a \$84,004 payout. He now has 27 cashes at the series for his career and is close to \$1 million in career earnings here in the world's biggest annual tournament series.

**Seventh Place:** Sergey Lebedev, a musician from Troitsk, Russia has now made four WSOP final table appearances. He made his big splash in last year's \$111,111 buy-in High-Roller Championship, coming in fourth. This time, Lebedev outlasted a much larger field and pocketed \$61,964 for the accomplishment.

**Eighth Place:** Phil Hellmuth, Jr., from Palo Alto, CA made his first final table of this year's summer series, but his stay didn't last long. He busted out within the first hour and was left to ponder over a nice-sized \$46,553 payout, but no would-be 15<sup>th</sup> gold bracelet victory. Hellmuth holds virtually every meaningful WSOP record – most cashes, most final tables, most wins – and added to his legacy with yet another deep run.

**Ninth Place:** Kyle Julius, from Naperville, IL was seeking his second gold bracelet of the '16 series, but was short stacked and exited rather quickly from the final nine. Julius won a similar event opening week called "Top Up Turbo," which gave him his first WSOP win. This was Julius' fourth cash in 2016, which have all taken place in tournaments with very large field-sizes. Julius added another \$35,636 to his poker bankroll.

This was the 48<sup>th</sup> official event on this year's schedule. This leaves 21 gold bracelet events still to go in what promises to be the biggest and most exciting WSOP ever.

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

Joe Cada, the 2009 WSOP Main Event Champion and a two-time gold bracelet winner, made his deepest run in two years (his last win, which was in 2014) by finishing 11<sup>th</sup>. This makes 19 career cashes for the Michigan poker pro, who crossed the \$10 million mark in WSOP earnings with this payout.

Jeremy Ausmus, a gold bracelet winner (2013) who also finished fifth in the 2012 WSOP Main Event Championship, came in 15<sup>th</sup> place.

Davidi Kitai, a three-time gold bracelet winner (2008, 2013, 2014), ended up as the 23<sup>rd</sup>-place finisher.

John Racener, a former November Nine finalist, cashed for the 40<sup>th</sup> time, coming in 26<sup>th</sup> place.

Michael “the Grinder” Mizrachi, a three-time gold bracelet winner (2010, 2011, 2012), finished in 27<sup>th</sup> place.

Jason Mercier, having the best WSOP of anyone so far in 2016, finished in 30<sup>th</sup> place. This was his ninth time to finish in-the-money at this year’s series.

Other notable players who cashed beyond the top 25 included – Chance Kornuth, Keith Lehr, Max Greenwood, Paul Volpe, Keven Stammen, Fabrice Soulier, Brock Parker, Ant Zinno, Christian Harder, and Dan Kelly.

### **FUN FACTS:**

Turbo poker tournaments debuted on the WSOP Circuit several years ago and proved to be popular for players not wanting to invest considerably more time as is required to play out a typical event to full duration. The betting levels escalate more quickly than in standard tournaments. This event had 30-minute levels. The action was completed in just two days, instead of the usual three.

### **EVENT DIRECT LINKS:**

For this event’s official final results (listing all players who finished in-the-money), please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1232&tid=14948>

For Ankush Mandavia’s official player profile page, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=91980>

For the live reporting logs for this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1232&tid=14948>

To access licensed images from this all other 2016 WSOP gold bracelet events, please visit:

[www.pokerphotoarchive.com](http://www.pokerphotoarchive.com)

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)*