



2016 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

BRIAN RAST WINS \$50,000 BUY-IN POKER PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP

34-year-old high-stakes poker pro collects \$1,296,097 top prize in Event #55

Rast wins 2016 Poker Players Championship and Chip Reese Memorial Trophy

Rast wins prestigious PPC for second time, joins Michael Mizrachi as a duel champ

Three gold bracelets now for latest [WSOP](#) champ

Another close call, but no wins in 2016 – [Justin Bonomo](#) finishes as runner up

Two-time champion [Michael Mizrachi](#) takes fourth place

MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Brian Rast

Birthplace: Denver, CO

Age: 34

Current Residence: Las Vegas, NV

Marital Status: Married

Profession: Professional Poker Player (cash games and tournaments)

Number of WSOP Cashes: 29

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 9

Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories (with this tournament): 3

Best Previous WSOP Finish: 1st (2011)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$5,565,141

Personal Facts: Plays in the highest-stakes poker games in the world

Winner's Quote:

"It's not just tournament results that will place me in history; it's also playing in the biggest limits. I will play anything for any amount of money. To me, that says a lot more career wise than tournament wins, although that's what everyone sees."

Brian Rast is the winner of the 2016 Poker Players Championship.

The 34-year-old professional poker player now residing in Las Vegas, NV added his name to an elite legacy of icons which currently includes [Freddy Deeb](#), [Scotty Nguyen](#), [David Bach](#), Michael Mizrachi, [Matthew Ashton](#), [Johnny Hennigan](#), [Mike Gorodinsky](#), and the late Chip Reese, who has become the tournament's revered patriarch. However, after tonight, he's now even done one better than those on that list -- except for one player.

With this astounding comeback victory in one of the game's most anticipated annual gatherings, Rast became only the second player in history to win the Poker Players Championship twice, after Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi first accomplished the feat in 2010 and 2012. Rast's wins have come in 2011 and now again in 2016.

The \$50,000 buy-in tournament featuring a wide mix of games was played over five days and nights and concluded on the ESPN main stage at the Rio in Las Vegas in front of a packed house of spectators, as well as a worldwide viewing audience online at WSOP.com.

Rast collected \$1,296,097 in prize money, making this triumph both the toughest and most satisfying win of his career -- both monetarily and certainly in terms of personal accomplishment. This marked his third career gold bracelet victory, after winning his first title in 2011, playing in a \$1,500 buy-in Pot-Limit Omaha event and then winning the PPC that same year. This was also his 29th career series cash. The prize money won tonight catapulted him across the \$5.5 million mark in lifetime WSOP earnings.

"This final table was really tough," Rast said in a post-tournament interview. "I was really low on chips for a lot of it. The heads up match was a really long battle. And, it was definitely satisfying. I would agree it was both my toughest and most satisfying win."

On the other side of the emotional spectrum, Rast's win dealt a difficult blow to Justin Bonomo, who had already come close a number of times at this year's series to winning what would have been a second WSOP title. He finished 2nd once and 3rd twice over the past month. Now, with this deep run, Bonomo has two 2nds and two 3rds. With yet another impressive showing Bonomo has jumped to second place in the 2016 WSOP ["Player of the Year"](#) race, but is still well behind current leader, Jason Mercier.

As was expected by just about everyone, the list of players that cashed included a virtual "Who's Who" of poker. Mike Gorodinsky, the PPC defending champion, finished in 13th place. Two-time PPC winner Michael "The Grinder Mizrachi" had the chip lead for a time on the final day, but finished fourth. Then, there was Robert Mizrachi, coming in 14th place, and Daniel Negreanu finishing 12th. This was a loaded field indeed, making it arguably the most prestigious of any tournament on the annual calendar for professional poker [players](#).

"I really didn't play perfect all the way through -- there were some times when I didn't play well. I played really bad the first level of Day Three -- I wasn't warmed up yet," Rast said. "But this tournament, with the structure, it's very long and it's very forgiving because of how many chips you get. I was really, really happy with how I played, and happy how I played at the final table."

Bonomo seized the chip lead on the third of the five playing days and garnered much of the public's attention, although with Mizrachi and Rast still in the field, there was plenty of excitement to go around. However, for Bonomo the hard road to an unfulfilled victory took a few unexpected turns and hit some speed bumps along the way, ultimately ending up in another close call without capturing the bracelet.

Bonomo lost the chip lead when play was down to five players. That's when Michael Mizrachi seemingly took command for a short time. However, the two-time winner of this event lost a few big pots to Bonomo and by the time play was three-handed, the Colorado-based poker pro was not only the chip leader but also seemingly in total command of the final table.

Once Eric Wasserman's good fight came to an end as the third-place finisher, that put Bonomo up against the formidable Brian Rast, who had closed this same deal before five years earlier. Rast overturned a 4 to 1 chip disadvantage and took the lead for a time. However, Bonomo roared back and seized command in a see-saw battle which left most of the poker world on the edge of their seats. The two experienced foes battled back and forth for nearly three hours before the final hand was dealt out.

The ultimate moment of triumph came when Rast scooped the final pot of the tournament with a full house – aces full of tens against Bonomo holding a straight, who finished as the runner up. His consolation prize amounted to \$801,048.

Rast's victory was made all the sweeter by having his father as a spectator. He's been at the final table for all three of his son's gold bracelet victories.

"Tournament wins are what everyone sees, and I get that," Rast said. "They are something you can look at. But for me, it's more about the other things. But I understand that's what the public looks at. From that standpoint, it's cool."

Rast went on to explain that he values success in both tournaments and cash games as being important when judging a historical legacy.

"For me I play so much poker, I play for really high-stakes all the time. So, I'm not always playing [tournaments](#) -- I'm mostly a cash game player. But since I play the biggest cash game limits in almost every game, I think that does say something professionally. Tournament results have a lot of luck involved. I was blessed to run really good in events that were so big. There are plenty of other great players who weren't as fortunate. While I feel I played well, that's not all of that and I realize it."

This prestigious tournament is now in its 11th year. The inaugural PPC was won by the late poker legend Chip Reese who died in 2007. The trophy presented each year is named in his honor. The winner gets to keep possession of the trophy until the following year when the prize is passed along to the new champion.

With this impressive victory, Rast's profile as one of the poker greats now appears cemented in history.

"This is what I have chosen to do with my life," Rast said. "I would be dishonest if I were to say that I haven't thought about my place in the game. I could have done a lot of things with my life when I was in my early 20s. I chose poker. And I do care. I don't care what other people in the world think. But I care what other poker professionals think. I take poker seriously and where my legacy is and how my peers think of me is a measure of professional respect. What I was able to do today was really special."

The PPC tourney has changed in format over the years. It has included a mix of games. This year, the tournament was played six-handed. The PPC included a rotation of games – including [Seven-Card Stud](#), No-Limit Hold'em, Deuce-to-Seven Triple Draw, Seven-Card Stud High-Low Split, [Omaha High-Low Split](#), Pot-Limit Omaha, [Limit Hold'em](#), and [Razz](#).

This grueling tourney which took more than 50 playing hours to complete attracted 91 entrants, which created a prize pool totaling \$4,176,000. The top 14 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: Justin Bonomo, from Glendale, CO cashed yet again, posting his fourth top-three finish of the summer. Bonomo has finished in-the-money 40 times in WSOP events and now has more than \$3.5 million in career earnings. His payout came to \$801,048.

Third Place: [Eric Wasserson](#), from Penn Valley, PA posted his best payout at the series, as third place paid \$545,772. Wasserson previously finished second in an event in 2014. This marked Wasserman's 20th time to cash at the series and seventh in-the-money finish this year.

Fourth Place: Michael "The Grinder" Mizrachi, from Hollywood, FL put up a noble fight in his attempt to join only four other players who have won the same event at least three times. He had the chip lead when play was four-handed, but then ran cold late in the tournament. Mizrachi, the owner of three gold bracelets, now has more than \$7.2 million in WSOP earnings. He cashed for \$380,942.

Fifth Place: [Wil Wilkinson](#), from Pacheco, CA is the owner of the California Grand Casino. He's been a fearless supporter of the game for many years and plays occasionally in WSOP events. This marked his 15th time to cash at the series. It was also his second final table of the summer, after coming in 3rd place in the \$10K Triple-Draw Lowball event. With the \$272,558 he collected for this tournament, Wilkinson's career earnings at the series now exceed \$1 million.

Sixth Place: [Ray Dehkharghani](#), from Leawood, KS won his gold bracelet earlier this year in the [\\$10K Razz Championship](#). This marked his second final table appearance of the summer, and second time to cash for more than six figures. With the \$200,027 Dehkharghani raked in from this tournament, along with his win earlier, the Kansan now has close to half a million in prize money earnings for 2016. This was Dehkharghani's 18th time to cash in a WSOP event.

This was the 55th official event on this year's schedule. This leaves 14 gold bracelet events still to go at the [2016 WSOP](#).

OTHER NOTABLE IN-THE MONEY FINISHERS:

Rep Porter, seeking his second win of the series and fourth career win overall, busted out shy of the final table, finishing in 10th place.

Paul Volpe, a two-time gold bracelet winner who picked up his second WSOP title earlier this summer, cashed in 11th place. This was Volpe's seventh cash of the series.

Daniel Negreanu, a six-time gold bracelet winner and member of the Poker Hall of Fame, finished in 12th place. This was only his second time to cash in the Poker Players Championship. Negreanu finished in 13th place in 2008.

Mike Gorodinsky, the winner of the Poker Players Championship in 2015, cashed for the third time in four years in this event. He finished 13th this year and 9th in 2013.

Robert Mizrachi was seeking his second final table appearance in the PPC, after coming in 5th place in 2010 (his brother Michael won that year). Instead, he finished barely in the money, in 14th place.

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=14955>

For Brian Rast's official player profile page, please visit: <http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=4702>

For the live reporting logs for this event, please visit: <http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1232&tid=14955>

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