



2015 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

THE MEANING OF DANIEL ALAEI'S FIFTH WSOP GOLD BRACELET

LA Poker Pro Wins the Most Prestigious Omaha High-Low Split Tournament of the Year

Alaei Tops \$10K World Championship Event and Collects \$391,037

Latest Champion Matches Stu Ungar, Berry Johnston, Scotty Nguyen (and 4 Others) in Career Wins

MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Daniel Alaei

Birthplace: Millbrea, CA (USA)

Age: 30

Current Residence: Los Angeles, CA (USA)

Marital Status: Married

Children: 3

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 31

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 8

Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories (with this tournament): 5

Best Previous WSOP Finish: 1st (2006, 2009, 2010, 2013)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$4,178,533

Personal Facts: Alaei is the fourth-youngest player to reach five WSOP victories in history, right behind Phil Hellmuth (age 28), Phil Ivey (age 29), and Allen Cunningham (age 29)

When the history of the World Series of Poker is ultimately written, and then re-written again, the name of the champion with the greatest number of wins might not be who you think.

Just days after poker legend Phil Hellmuth won his 14th WSOP title (at age 51) here at the 2015 WSOP, another poker player who doesn't draw nearly the attention nor accolades did something only three other persons have done in the 46-year history of the most prestigious poker event on the planet.

On Wednesday evening here at the Rio in Las Vegas, Daniel Alaei won his fifth career gold bracelet. The professional poker player from Los Angeles, CA topped a world-class field of 157 players in the \$10,000 buy-in Omaha High-Low Split championship, which was played over a three-day period. The total prize pool amounted to \$1,475,800, with Alaei taking \$391,097 for first place.

What makes the win noteworthy, beyond the prestige that goes with any WSOP win, was Alaei's resume of accomplishments still at a relatively young age. At 30, his fifth win means he's the fourth-youngest player in history ever to reach that milestone. Only Phil Hellmuth, Phil Ivey, and Allen Cunningham, also with five wins by the time of their 31st birthday, reached the lofty plateau faster.

Alaei's victory on this date places him into some extraordinary poker company – including other five-time WSOP winners Stu Ungar, Berry Johnston, John Juanda, David Chui, Chris Ferguson, Allen Cunningham, Scotty Nguyen, and Gary “Bones” Berland.

By comparison, Hellmuth won his fifth gold bracelet at age 28, which means his all-time wins mark was padded over the next 22 years (9 more wins took place between 1993 and present). Assuming Alaei continues at the current pace, he very well could emerge as the looming challenger to Hellmuth, although Phil Ivey (10 wins at age 39) hopes to be in that discussion. Indeed, Alaei's accomplishments are even more impressive considering he plays in relatively few tournaments ever year compared to many of his peers. This was his first WSOP tournament entry of 2015.

Remarkably, this was also the second time Alaei has won the world championship of Omaha High-Low Split (it's the highest buy-in such event in the world). He also won back in 2009.

Alaei topped a brutally tough final table which included no less than four former gold bracelet winners – including Alaei himself, Scott Clements, Mike Wattel, and Ken Aldridge. In fact, of the 18 players who cashed in this event, 9 had won WSOP gold in the past.

Alaei won the finale by staging a dramatic comeback, arguably the most improbable of any of his five WSOP victories. He was short-stacked several times during the final day, and was out-chipped by more than 6 to 1 when playing heads-up against a

formidable challenger named Kyle Maiso, from Scottsdale, AZ. It appeared Maiso would come out on top during much of the finale's late stages, but Alaei consistently got his chips in with the best of it and scooped enough pots to slowly reverse the chip counts and win the victory, which was streamed live over WSOP.com.

This victory seemed all in a day's work to Alaei, who isn't demonstrative and rarely makes much of his prodigal talent and natural abilities. Once the final hand was dealt, Alaei demonstrated the customary sportsmanship that has defined his career, posed for a few photos, and then answered the following questions, as follows:

Question: Where does this gold bracelet compare to the others you've won?

Alaei: I hadn't planned on playing that many tournaments this year. This was my first event to enter, so this was a bit surprising. As far as how this compares, I think they are all pretty sweet. I did win this event in 2009, so it's nice to win it again. It was especially nice to win since I was so low-stacked when we were heads-up. So, it was really nice to come back and win it.

Question: What do you think of your name now being mentioned among some of the true greats of the game? Is that a conversation we should be having now?

Alaei: I don't know. I love coming to the World Series. I love playing the tournaments. I hope to win more, and maybe one day to be in that conversation. As for now, I just try to play my best and do what I do.

Question: Can you talk about the heads-up match and the comeback against Kyle Miaso?

Alaei: It was a lot of back and forth. I didn't start out well (going from 1 million down to 500,000). Then, I reversed things and got him where he was down to 500,000, but then he came back again. I just happened to win the last pot.

Question: What are your plans the rest of the series?

Alaei: I'm thinking of playing (some other \$10K events).

Question: You seem to prefer alternative games, other than No-Limit Hold'em. Any particular reason why this is so?

Alaei: I don't play any of the No-Limit events. I might play the Main Event or the \$10K Six-Max. But I just feel the players are so advanced. I feel like they are much better than me, so I don't even bother playing in those tournaments. I might play in a few cash games, but that's it.

The final table was completed in about six hours. Behind Alaei winning, the official order of finish was as follows:

Second Place: Kyle Miaso, a 31-year-old poker pro from Arizona finished as the runner up. He dominated play late, that is, until Alaei made his heads-up comeback. Nonetheless, with the \$241,691 payout as a consolation prize, this was Maiso's best WSOP finish among his 8 cashes.

Third Place: Jeffrey Vaughn, a 58-year-old poker pro from Encino, CA cashed for \$175,088 for finishing in third place. He cashed in an event here at the series 19 years ago, finishing in 4th place, which makes this tournament his best career showing, to date. Unfortunately, Vaughn couldn't keep up with the rising chip counts of either Alaei or Miaso, and went out late on Day Three.

Fourth Place: Scott Clements has developed a well-deserved reputation as one of the game's top Omaha High-Low Split players. He's won two gold bracelets (2006 and 2007, one in this game) and now has 39 WSOP cashes and 11 final table appearances, including a runner-up finish in this same event back in 2009. Clements, a poker pro from Mount Vernon, WA added \$129,235 to his poker bankroll for finishing 4th. His career WSOP earnings now total nearly \$2.5 million.

Fifth Place: Ken Aldridge, known as "Yellow Jacket" buzzed away with 5th-place prize money, amounting to \$97,122. Aldridge, a 67-year-old former school teacher turned part-time semi-pro from North Carolina, won his gold bracelet in a Six-Handed NLHE event back in 2009. This was Aldridge's best finish since that victory, which moves him over \$600,000 in winnings here in Las Vegas.

Sixth Place: Anthony Zinno, an attorney from Boston, MA finished in 6th place. He enjoyed his best showing at the series following four deep runs in WSOP Circuit events. Zinno, making his first cash here in 2015, pocketed \$74,262 in prize money.

Seventh Place: Mike Wattel was one of four gold bracelet winners at the final table. He won his title back in 1999, in this same game. Wattel couldn't establish any momentum during the finale, and went out with \$57,748 in prize money, which makes for nearly \$2 million in career winnings at the WSOP. Wattel, a longtime poker pro from the Phoenix area has been playing as a pro for nearly 25 years. This was his 39th in-the-money finish.

Eighth Place: Tobias Hausen, from Ockfen, Germany finished in 8th place. His best WSOP showing was worth \$45,661.

Ninth Place: Gold bracelet winner and former November Niner Jeremy Ausmus finished in 9th place, on the crest of the final table. The 2012 Main Event finalists who finished 5th padded his bankroll with another \$36,668 in prize money. This makes for 32 career cashes since 2010, and \$3.5 million in career WSOP earnings. Ausmus is 35-years-old and lives in Las Vegas.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS:

Other players who cashed in this event aside from those who made the final table included – Joe Cassidy (11th), Gary Benson (16th), Eli Elezra (17th), and Erik Seidel (18th).

Omaha High-Low specialist “Prince of Docness” (that’s his real name) cashed in this event, finishing 18th. All six of the Prince’s cashes have been in Omaha-related events.

FUN FACTS:

Half of the players who finished in the money, half -- 9 out of 18 -- had won gold bracelets in the past.

EVENT DIRECT LINKS:

For this event’s results, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1136&tid=14221>

For Daniel Alaei’s official player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=2229>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1136&tid=14221>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1136&tid=14221>

For official winner photo, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14221-winner-photo.jpg>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=21>

(Note: Will appear 48 hours after event concludes)

Written by Nolan Dalla (WSOP Media Staff)