



2015 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

FRANCO IVAN LUCA BECOMES THE FIRST WSOP WINNER EVER FROM ARGENTINA

23-Year-Old Poker Pro from Buenos Aires Region Tops \$1K NLHE Event and Collects \$353,391 First Prize in His First WSOP Cash

Four Days Needed to Determine Final Outcome; Czech Player Artur Rudziankov Comes in Second

MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Franco Ivan Luca

Birthplace: Buenos Aires (Argentina)

Age: 23

Current Residence: Italy (traveling)

Marital Status: Single

Children: 0

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Number of WSOP Cashes: 1

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 1

Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories: 1

Best Previous WSOP Finish: None

Total WSOP Earnings: \$353,391

Personal Facts: Luca started out playing poker online, and gravitated to live games and tournaments. He now plays full-time in Europe.

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

Franco Ivan Luca became the first player from Argentina in the storied 47-year-history of the World Series of Poker to win a coveted gold bracelet.

The 23-year-old poker pro originally from the Buenos Aires region reigned supreme in the \$1,000 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em event, which was played over a four-day period at the Rio in Las Vegas.

Although poker has become widely popular in Argentina over the past decade, no player from that country (either by birth or citizenry) had previously won a WSOP title. The closest any player had come was Nacho Barbero, who made three final table appearances and cashed 13 times. Meanwhile, other South American nations produced memorable WSOP winners – including Brazil, Venezuela, and Columbia. Now, add Argentina to the international fraternity of gold bracelet winners.

Another big turnout -- 2,150 entrants – packed the tournament arena, generating a \$1,935,900 prize pool. The top 216 finishers were paid, with Luca taking the biggest share of the pot. His win amounted to \$353,391. This was the biggest win of Luca's poker career, although he's enjoyed a number of cashes on the European Poker Tour, as well. He also collected his first gold bracelet.

This year marked the first time Luca had attended the WSOP. He started playing poker online in Argentina and gradually built up his bankroll. Luca specialized in middle to high stakes heads-up matches. When he turned 21, Luca moved to Italy and has since been playing in the EPT circuit and other events throughout Europe.

"I took it very steady, one step at a time," Luca said afterward through a translator. "I built my bankroll. This was the first year I had enough money and confidence to take a shot at the WSOP."

The tournament was hotly contested and ran into an unscheduled fourth day since the first three playing sessions could not determine the winner. On the final day, Luca bested Artur Rudziankov, from Prague, Czech Republic. The duel lasted more than two hours, with at least four chip-lead changes. Rudziankov collected \$219,976 as a consolation prize.

Other notable players who cashed in the top 20 included – British pro Chris Moorman (10th), iconic French gamesman Bertrand "Elky" Grospellier (11th), top pro Jason Koon, and 2012 Big One for One Drop champ Antonio Esfandiari.

Following Luca finishing in the top spot, the descending order of results was as follows:

Second Place: Artur Rudziankov came in 2nd. The 26-year-old was born in Belarus and now resides in Prague, Czech Republic. Much like the winner, Rudziankov now plays mostly in Europe. He had accumulated \$164,000 in tourney winnings up to this date, which makes this runner-up finish in this event alone well more than his career earnings.

Third Place: Travis Case, a 38-year-old actor from Hollywood, CA, finished in 3rd place. Interesting side note about Case: He was the stand in and stunt double for star Ashton Kutcher on the hit TV show “*Two-and-a-Half Men*” and also appeared on another show titled “*Wipeout*.” In his first WSOP cash, the actor clearly passed this audition – worth \$152,907.

Fourth Place: Pierre Horaud hoped to become the first gold bracelet winner from France in two years with a win, but had to settle for 4th place. He’s a 60-year-old physician who is originally from Bucharest, Romania. This was only his second time to cash at the WSOP. The other took place in 2008. Horaud collected \$110,123 in prize money.

Fifth Place: Bruce Angeski, from Sacramento, CA enjoyed his highest WSOP cash by finishing 5th and earning \$80,485. Angeski also cashed in last year’s Seniors Championship.

Sixth Place: David Chase, a 37-year-old full-time Limit Hold’em player at the Commerce Casino in Los Angeles, took down 6th place. He previously worked as a mortgage lender. This was Chase’s 9th time to cash at the series, and second in-the-money finish this year after going deep in the Millionaire Maker tourney. Chase earned a well-deserved \$59,538.

Seventh Place: Viliyan Petleshkov, from Plovdiv, Bulgaria came in 7th place. He’s a 28-year-old pro poker player who frequents tournaments in Eastern Europe. This was Petleshkov’s second cash this year, after his in-the-money finish in The Colossus. Seventh place paid out \$44,622.

Eighth Place: Kai Yang, born in Taiwan and now living in Plano, TX, finished in 8th place. He nearly cracked the top 1 percent in The Colossus, (265th out of nearly 23,000), and posted this first final table appearance as his second cash of the series. \$33,868 was the payout.

Ninth Place: Omri Sabach hoped to become the second winner from Israel at this year’s series, but he stumbled at the final table. Sabach, from Tel Aviv is a 34-year-old business manager. Amazingly, this was his first WSOP tournament ever, and he managed to outlast a whopping 2,142 players in his Las Vegas debut. Sabach even noted that he’d never played in any tournament of this size before. “The biggest tournament I’ve ever played before was 64 players,” he said. Ninth place paid \$26,008.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS:

Aside from the final table finishers, other notable players who cashed in the top 20 included – British pro Chris Moorman (10th), iconic Frenchman Bertrand “Elky”

Grospellier (11th), top pro Jason Koon (17th), and 2012 Big One for One Drop champ Antonio Esfandiari (18th).

Winners of gold bracelets this year who cashed in this event included – Shaun Deeb and Sam Greenwood.

FUN FACTS:

The gender breakdown of participants was 2,059 males and 92 females (about 5 percent of the field).

The average age of participants was 40 years, with ages ranging from 21 up to 79.

There were no gold bracelet winners among the nine players at the final table.

EVENT DIRECT LINKS:

For this event's results, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1136&tid=14230>

For Franco Ivan Luca's official player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=206342>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1136&tid=14230>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1136&tid=14230>

For official winner photo, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14230-winner-photo.jpg>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=30>

(Note: Will appear 48 hours after event concludes)

Written by Nolan Dalla (WSOP Media Staff)