



2015 WSOP OFFICIAL REPORT

EVENT #55: \$1,500 buy-in Draftkings 50/50 No-Limit Hold'em

ENTRIES: 1,123

PRIZE POOL: \$1,516,050

FIRST PLACE PRIZE: \$200,618

PLACES PAID: 562

DATES: June 27-29, 2015

Brandon Wittmeyer Crowned King of Draftkings 50/50 No-Limit Hold'em Inaugural

Professional Sports Bettor Wins the Perfect Tournament

Half the Field Gets Paid in Unusual Twist at 2015 WSOP

Draftkings Sponsors First WSOP Tournament in History

MEET THE LATEST WSOP GOLD BRACELET CHAMPION

Name: Brandon Wittmeyer

Birthplace: Chicago, IL

Age: 31

Current Residence: Las Vegas, NV

Marital Status: Married

Children: None

Profession: Professional Gambler (Sports Bettor)

Number of WSOP Cashes: 5

Number of WSOP Final Table Appearances: 2

Number of WSOP Gold Bracelet Victories: 1

Best Previous WSOP Finish: 3rd (2015)

Total WSOP Earnings: \$446,557

Personal Facts: Prior to engaging in sports gambling, Wittmeyer was a holistic fitness trainer for two years

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

How ironic would it be if a professional sports bettor were to win a poker tournament sponsored by Draftkings?

More on that in a moment.

One of the most unusual tournaments in the 46-year-history of the World Series of Poker ended late tonight. The inaugural tournament officially known as “Draftkings 50-50 No-Limit Hold’em” was designed to pay out precisely half the field, which is more five times the customary number of players who cash in a major tournament (normally about 10 percent).

Out of the 1,123 total entrants -- 562 players cashed. The tournament buy-in was \$1,500, and the minimum cash out was \$1,000 (for places 282 through 562). Players got their money back (\$1,500) up until the 118th spot, and then earned a profit beyond the 117th play position.

Sponsored by Draftkings, the tournament provided a highly-visible platform for the widely-popular fantasy sports website. This marked the first time ever that a WSOP event was officially designated with a name sponsor.

Winning the debut competition was Brandon Wittmeyer, from Las Vegas, NV. He is a 31-year-old professional gambler, originally from Chicago. He mostly bets on sporting events and has supported himself by gambling for the past ten years. This was Wittmeyer’s first WSOP victory. What a coincidence that a full-time sports bettor would win this very first historic tournament sponsored by a hugely-popular website that rewards players based on fantasy points and game statistics.

“Honestly, I did not really think about the sports betting and Draftkings connection,” Wittmeyer said afterward. “This just happened to be the next tournament on the schedule after I finished 3rd in the other event. So, it was nothing I planned out.”

This has been quite a week for Wittmeyer. He came in 3rd place in a previous event, which was the \$2,500 buy-in No-Limit Hold’em event. He’s now pocketed more than \$400,000 in the last six days, and a gold bracelet.

"I've played about eight tournament this year so far. It's amazing to have this happen to me back-to-back making two final tables, and now this," Wittmeyer said. I just thought it would be neat to cash again since they were paying half the field. I didn't expect to come this far again, let alone win it."

Nonetheless, Wittmeyer's position grew steadily more formidable as the final table progressed. By the time play got down to heads-up, he was clearly the player in control, with a 3 to 1 chip lead. It didn't take long for Wittmeyer to close out the victory, which happened when his A-Q bested Gomez's A-10. A ten flopped, giving Gomez some hope, but a queen on the river was the nail in the coffin ending the tournament and giving Wittmeyer the victory.

"I really felt comfortable playing at the final table," Wittmeyer said. "For me, finishing 3rd before was something I learned from. There was a huge hand when I didn't trust my read and that might have cost me the tournament because I made a key mistake. This time, I decided to go with my reads and trust my instincts. I really think that helped me this time around."

The total prize pool came to \$1,516,050, which was divided amongst the massive number of cashers, although Wittmeyer ended up with the biggest cut -- \$200,618.

The final table included no former gold bracelet winners. Following Wittmeyer's finish in the top spot, the descending order of results was as follows:

Second Place: Derek Gomez, from Las Vegas, NV finished in 2nd place, which paid \$123,907. He is a poker dealer at the Wynn Casino. Gomez also grinds out extra money in small buy-in tournaments around town in his free time. This marked Gomez's third cash this summer and fifth time in the money overall.

Third Place: Ping Liu, from Chicago, IL finished in 3rd place, which paid \$77,516. The Chinese-born poker player has quite a record in WSOP Circuit events, with 17 cashes. This also marked his seventh time to cash in the summer series. The payout was his second-largest WSOP-related prize after coming in 3rd place earlier this year in the championship of a Circuit event played at Planet Hollywood, in Las Vegas.

Fourth Place: Mukul Pahuja, from Coconut Creek, FL finished in 4th place, which paid \$56,245. Pahuja, who owns two WSOP Circuit gold rings, now has 14 cashes at the series. This was his third cash of the summer.

Fifth Place: Tom Braband, from Oshkosh, WI finished in 5th place, which paid \$41,540. This marked his 25th time to cash at the series. In fact, Braband has not cashed at least once each year since 2008, with this his best showing.

Sixth Place: Matt Affleck, from Mill Creek, WA finished in 6th place, which paid \$31,079. This was his 18th time to cash at the WSOP, which includes a 15th-place showing in the 2010 Main Event Championship. It was also his second-deepest run at the series (5th place was his best finish).

Seventh Place: Perati Muhamet, from Cervo, Italy finished in 7th place, which paid \$23,650. This was his fifth cash of the summer series.

Eighth Place: Stefano Terziani, from Florence, Italy finished in 8th place, which paid \$18,268. This marked his first occasion to cash at the WSOP.

Ninth Place: Michael Whitman, from Horseshoe Bay, TX rounded out the final table as the 9th place finisher, which paid \$14,256. This was his first cash in a WSOP event.

OTHER IN-THE-MONEY FINISHERS:

Aside from the final table finishers, other gold bracelet winners who cashed in the top 100 included – Matt Matros (19th), Dominik Nitsche (24th), Todd Witteles (40th), Scott Montgomery (47th), Kyle Cartwright (67th), and Dutch Boyd (76th).

Other notable and recognizable names who cashed included – Jim McManus (writer/author) and Linda Kenney-Baden (famous defense attorney).

FUN FACTS:

There were 1,073 males and 50 females who entered this event.

The average age of participants was 41 years, slightly older than average. Ages of participants ranged from 21 up to 80-years-old.

There were 44 different nations represented in this tournament.

EVENT DIRECT LINKS:

For this event's results, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/results.asp?grid=1136&tid=14255>

For Brandon Wittmeyer's official player profile page, visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/players/playerprofile.asp?playerID=185298>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/updates.asp?grid=1136&tid=14255>

For photos from this event, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/tournaments/photos.asp?grid=1136&tid=14255>

For official winner photo, please visit:

<http://www.wsop.com/pdfs/reports/14255-winner-photo.jpg>

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

<http://www.wsop.com/videos/?vcat=55>

(Note: Will appear 48 hours after event concludes)

Written by Nolan Dalla (WSOP Media Staff)