



2012 World Series of Poker Europe
Hotel Majestic Barriere / Le Croisette Casino Barriere
Cannes, France
Official Report
Event #6

Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha
Buy-In: €1,500 (+ 150)
Number of Entries: 206
Total Prize Pool: €302,820
Number of Places Paid: 21
First Place Prize: €83,275
September 27-29, 2012

Tournament Headlines

Francisco Da Costa Santos Becomes First Portuguese Gold Bracelet Winner in History

Porto Poker Pro Wins Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha Title at WSOP Europe

Spain's Ana Marquez Finishes as Runner Up

John Monnette Cashes Again -- Inches towards WSOP 'Player of the Year' Lead

Tournament Overview

Cannes, France (September 29, 2012) – Poker history was made tonight at the La Majestic Barriere in Cannes, France.

Francisco Da Costa Santos became the first Portuguese gold bracelet winner ever in the 43-year history of the World Series of Poker. The 36-year-old professional poker player and small business owner from Porto, Portugal won the Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha championship, which paid €83,275.

Remarkably, the highest previous finish ever by any player from Portugal prior to Da Costa Santos' victory was in this same event held last year at Cannes (2011 WSOP Europe), when fellow countryman Michel Dattani finished as runner up to Philippe Boucher, from Canada.

Indeed, this has been a big series for first-time happenings at WSOP Europe. In Event 1, Imed Ben Mahmoud became the first Tunisian gold bracelet winner ever. Then, in Event 2, Roger Hairabedian shattered the home field curse by becoming the first Frenchman to win poker's most coveted prize on French soil. And now, Da Costa Santos has made Portugal proud.

"Poker is still very new in my country," Da Costa Santos said afterward. "We do not have so many players right now. But I think it's going to catch on and be more popular. There are a lot of younger players now who are starting to get interested in the game."

Da Costa Santos triumphed in a highly-competitive field, comprised of players from nearly two-dozen different countries. In fact, ten nations were represented among the top 21 finishers, who collected prize money.

The three-day tournament concluded with a heads-up showdown which was unquestionably one of the most interesting finales in some time for WSOP play. After a five-hour final, during which the last five players were whittled down to just two, Da Costa Santos faced Spain's Ana Marquez, who aspired to be only the second female to win a gold bracelet at WSOP Europe (Annette Obrestad was the first, in 2007). She also had a shot at being only the second Spaniard to win a WSOP title (2001 world champion Carlos Mortensen was the first).

But Da Costa Santos would not be denied. He won the final pot of the tournament by flopping a straight. After Marquez missed her flush draw, Da Costa Santos lifted his smaller opponent in the air, likely the first time a winner has ever lifted up the second-place finisher in a moment of spontaneous jubilation.

"I am so happy for him," Marquez said as she watched her former rival pose for photographs. "Francisco winning is almost like me winning....that's how happy I am."

Da Costa Santos started playing poker seriously about ten years ago. His first game was Seven-Card Stud, which later gravitated to Hold'em. Da Costa Santos said he began playing Pot-Limit Omaha only about four years ago.

"Words cannot express how I feel at this moment," Da Costa Santos stated during his post-tournament interview, moments after breaking down in tears as he circled the final table stage in celebration. "I really thought I was going to win it. But until it happens, you really can't believe what the feeling is like. It's incredible."

This was the sixth of seven gold bracelet events scheduled at Cannes. Officially listed as Event 6, the €1,500 (+150) buy-in Six-Handed Pot-Limit Omaha tournament attracted 206 entries. The total prize pool came to €302,820. The top 21 finishers were awarded prize money.

This event also reshaped the 2012 WSOP “Player of the Year” race, in part. Through the conclusion of WSOP Europe Event 6, John Monnette currently ranks in second place, with 616.25 points. At this moment, the leader is Antonio Esfandiari with 683.10 points. Phil Ivey ranks third with 568.70.

Meet the Champion

Full Name: Francisco Da Costa Santos

Hometown: Porto, Portugal

Current Residence: Porto, Portugal

Age: 36

Occupation: Full-time poker pro / Small business owner

Family: Single (live-in girlfriend -- Mariana)

Poker Experience: Full-time poker player (online and live –both cash games and tournaments) / Small-business owner (construction)

Education: College Degree (Universidade do Porto) -- Engineering

Number of WSOP Events Entered: 3 (all at WSOP Europe)

Total WSOP Cashes: 1

Total WSOP Final Table Appearances: 1

Total Career WSOP Earnings: €83,275

Winner Quotes

On what he thought was the turning point of the tournament: *“I knew I was going to win when (it was five-handed) and I had the heart to bluff Andrew.”*

On what the victory means as a poker player: *“It means a lot to win. Since I started playing, my goal has always been to get a World Series gold bracelet. This is especially true since, until now, no Portuguese player had ever won one before.”*

On starting out in poker as a Seven-Card Stud player: *“I first heard of poker in 1994 when I was at the university. The games were crazy. It was Seven-Card Stud, but it was Pot-Limit. I never saw that anywhere else (except in Portugal).”*

On his decision to try and play poker full-time and the reactions of others: *“When I decided to do this, my parents didn’t like it at all. Then, when I started winning, they liked it even less. They thought it was gambling. But I went ahead and finished my college degree and then I started a business. I did that for seven years. Then, in 2008 they legalized poker in some casinos in Portugal, and it was like (in Portugal) what happened with Chris Moneymaker in 2003.”*

On returning to the game after a layoff while he worked his business: *“I had been away and when I returned, I thought it was going to be Seven-Card Stud. But they were playing this new game (Hold’em). And so, I had to learn a new game. I said, what the **** is this new game? I had no idea to play and got knocked out instantly from my first tournament. So, I decided to study and learn – I got some books and some videos. By the end of the year, I had reached my first final table, which was the fourth live tournament I had ever played.”*

On what winning a WSOP gold bracelet means: *“I wanted to be the first to win the bracelet. But I did not think that would happen because of the taxes. If we go there (to Las Vegas) and we win something, they will tax us at 30 percent. But we can come here and it’s much better for us.”*

The Final Table (Top Seven)

The final playing session began on a Saturday afternoon at 2 pm, with five players remaining. Note that technically, the final table consisted of seven players. But two finalists – Nikolay Volper and Andy Frankenger -- went bust in rapid succession at end of day two, leaving only five players remaining for the day three restart. Final table play ended at about 9:30 pm –making the total duration about 7.5 hours (minus a one-hour dinner break).

The runner up was Ana Marquez, from Malaga, Spain. This was her fourth time to cash at the WSOP, and represented her best performance, to date.

Two Finish players made the final table – Aku Joentausta (3rd) and Petteri Kalenius (4th).

Aside from Andy Frankenger, Andrew Lichtenberger was unquestionably the most accomplished finalist. He has more than \$1 million in WSOP earnings, including a WSOP Circuit Main Event championship, won at Caesars Atlantic City, He finished fifth

WSOP Gold bracelet winner (2012) Andy Frankenger finished in seventh place.

When heads-up play began, the starting chip counts were as follows:

Da Costa Santos – 742,000 in chips

Marquez – 187,000 in chips

Heads-up play lasted only about ten minutes. On the final hand of the tournament, Da Costa Santos flopped a ten-high straight. Marque flopped a diamond draw. Two blanks hit on the turn and river and Da Costa Santos was declared the new champion.

Other in-the-Money Finishers

Only three gold bracelet winners made the money.

Two-time gold bracelet winner John Monnette (a.k.a. “Angry John”) finished in 14th place. He’s now in second place on the WSOP “Player of the Year” leaderboard. Only one more event remains to be played.

John Monnette is one of the few players with three cashes this year at WSOP Europe (through six completed events).

This was Daniel Negreanu’s 58th career cash in a WSOP event, which ranks in the top 20 all-time.

A full list of in-the-money finishers can be found on WSOP.com.

More About WSOP Europe 2012

Three countries have now hosted WSOP gold bracelet events – the United States, Great Britain, and France.

In its 44-year history, WSOP gold bracelet tournament action has taken place at only five venues. They are Binion’s Horseshoe (1970-2003), Rio Las Vegas (2004-present), Casino at the Empire (2007-2010), Caesars Palace Las Vegas (one event in 2011), and now Barriere Cannes (2011-2012). *Note: During the 1980s, as few other Downtown Las Vegas casinos also hosted limited portions of the WSOP.*

The first four years of WSOP Europe were played in London, UK at Casino at the Empire.

This marks the first time that a WSOP tournament has ever been played in a non-English speaking nation.

This is the first time that any WSOP gold bracelet event has been hosted at a non-owned venue. In other words, Barriere is not a Caesars Entertainment property.

One of the official sponsors of 2012 WSOP Europe is luxury carmaker, Mercedes Benz. Many players have been shuttled to and from the nearby Nice-Cote d’Azur Airport (about 30 miles away) via Mercedes Benz chauffeur-driven cars.

Official WSOP rules typically specify an “English Only” rule, which means all table discussion relating to play must be conducted in English. However, at WSOP Europe (Cannes), there is a dual “English or French Only” rule, which means players can communicate in either language at any time.

Tournament play is split between two first-class venues – Le Croisette Casino Barriere

and Hotel Majestic Barriere. The casino and hotel are nestled neck-a-neck along the coastal esplanade facing the Mediterranean Sea. The two poker venues are unquestionably the most glamorous settings for any poker tournament ever held. Poker action takes place inside the same ballrooms which host the world-famous Cannes Film Festival, held annually every May. Many of Hollywood's most-famous movie stars have stayed at the Majestic Barriere. The hallways are filled with photographs of Hollywood royalty from the 1930s to the present day. The hotel also hosts various global economic summits, which attract many of the world's leaders.

2012 WSOP Bracelet Update

Through the conclusion of this tournament, the nationality of 2012 WSOP champions, including all the events that took place in Las Vegas this summer, has been the following 67 players:

United States (43): Brent Hanks, Leif Force, Cory Zeidman, Andy Bloch, Herbert Tapscott, John Monnette, Brian Hastings, David "Doc" Arsht, Brandon Schaefer, Adam Friedman, Matt Matros, Andy Frankenberger, Phil Hellmuth, Cliff Goldkind, Ben Scholl, Randy Ohel, Joe Cassidy, Brian Meinders, Gabe Scott, Ylon Schwartz, Larry Wright, Allyn Jaffrey-Shulman, Carter Phillips, David "Bakes" Baker, Max Steinberg, Chris Tryba, David "ODB" Baker, Ronnie Bardah, Greg Ostrander, Henry Lu, Joey Weissman, Michael "the Grinder" Mizrachi, Steven Loube, Kenny Hsiung, Greg Hobson, Vanessa Selbst, Jim Willerson, Will Jaffe, Antonio Esfandiari (2), Greg Merson, Nick Schulman, Ryan Eriqezzo

France (3): Aubin Cazals, Roger Hairabedian, Giovanni Rosadoni

Canada (2): Simon Charette, Timothy Adams

Vietnam (2): Dung "Gomer" Nguyen, Yen Dang

Thailand (1): Chip Saechao

Bulgaria (1): Nick Jivkov

Iran (1): Ashkan Razavi

The Netherlands (1): Vincent van der Fluit

Belgium (1): Michael Gathy

Japan (1): Naoya Kihara

Great Britain (1): Craig McCorkell

Germany (1): Jan-Peter Jachtmann, Dominik Nitsche

Ukraine (1): Okelsii Kovalchuk

Italy (1): Rocco Palumbo

Greece (1): Pete Vilandos

Czech Republic (1): Tomas Junek

Russia (1): Viacheslav Zhukov

Tunisia (1): Imed Ben Mahmoud

Portugal (1): Francisco Da Costa Santos.

Report by Nolan Dalla