

Norway's 18-Year-Old Annette Obrestad Stuns Poker World With 1 Million Pounds Sterling Win In First World Series of Poker(R) Europe

London – Annette Obrestad became the youngest bracelet winner in World Series of Poker history early today by conquering the Main Event at the first annual WSOP Europe Presented by Betfair.

The 18-year-old Norwegian played masterfully over the course of the five-day 10,000 pounds buy-in No-Limit Texas Hold'Em Championship, outlasting a field that included the strongest showing of professionals in European poker history.

„I never expected to win,“ said the composed and articulate Obrestad, who turns 19 in just one day. „I'm speechless. I really don't know what to say.“

„In the end, the Europeans dominated here,“ said WSOP Commissioner Jeffrey Pollack. „But this is the start of a new tradition for the World Series of Poker and the European and global poker communities. WSOP Europe will provide more exciting action in the years to come and we're confident poker greats from all over the world – and across the generations – will shine here, just as they have in Las Vegas.“

Obrestad's win capped a series that saw European players – make that young European poker players – shut out veteran American professionals by winning all three WSOP bracelets up for grabs. Her victory over 22-year-old John Tabatabai of London came when her three sevens beat his two pair.

Obrestad won the 1 million pounds, or USD 2,013,102, first-place prize and the most coveted prize in all of gaming, a World Series of Poker 18-karat gold and jewel-encrusted bracelet created by luxury Swiss watchmaker CORUM, the official timepiece of the WSOP. Tabatabai earned GBP 570,150, or USD 1,147,770, for second place.

With her performance, Obrestad's payday snapped two records held by poker pro Annie Duke. The first was Duke's one-day-old record as the first woman to exceed USD 1 million in official WSOP winnings, thanks to her 21st place finish in the WSOP Europe Main Event. Duke's 30,770 pounds, or USD 61,943, payday saw her edge just over the USD 1 million earnings mark. Duke also held the single-event record win for a woman with her USD 2 million winner-take-all victory in the 2004 Tournament of Champions staged by Harrah's Entertainment.

The world's top-ranked professionals journeyed to London this month for a chance to make poker history by winning the first three WSOP bracelets ever awarded outside the United States. But the likes of Phil Hellmuth, Doyle Brunson, Johnny Chan and scores of others were stymied in their quests, as Europe's cadre of young poker players – most of whose playing experience was gained online – performed exceptionally well.

Matthew McCullough, the last remaining American in the Main Event, finished third after going all in with top pair on the flop. The hopes of the 26-year-old New Jersey resident for a WSOP bracelet were dashed when John Tabatabai, who called with middle pair, matched his ace kicker for two pair that eliminated the full-time anesthetist. McCullough collected 381,910 pounds for third place.

Norwegian Oyvind Riisen, 22, won 257,020 pounds for finishing fourth, and Johannes Korsar, 20, of Uppsala, Sweden, got 191,860 pounds for fifth place.

Dominic Kay, 30, a professional sports trader from London,

finished sixth to earn 152,040 pounds, while 24-year-old Magnus Persson of Gothenburg, Sweden, received 114,030 pounds for seventh place. Copenhagen's Theo Jorgensen, at age 35 the oldest player at the final table, won 85,070 pounds for his eighth-place finish.

Final-table play got under way at 2:30 p.m. GMT at The Casino at The Empire on Leicester Square. A few moments later, 21-year-old Londoner James Keys, who began the day with the lowest number of tournament chips, was eliminated. He collected 61,540 pounds for his efforts.

The 10th through 36th place finishers received from 41,630 pounds to 27,150 pounds, depending on their final position. The total prize pool for the Main Event was 3,676,990 pounds.