

WSOP: Kenny Tran Wins Heads-up World Championship

Kenny Tran is the 2008 World Series of Poker Heads-up World Champion after defeating eight consecutive opponents on his way to a gold bracelet and USD 539,040.

Tran's Sunday night victory in Event #25 (USD 10,000 Heads-up No Limit Hold'em) earned him his first WSOP bracelet to add to a career that already includes a final table finish in the 2007 WSOP USD 50,000 H.O.R.S.E event as well as deep finishes in both the 2007 Main Event and the 2007 WSOP Europe Main Event.

Tran is considered by many to be one of the best live cash game players in the world and he can often be found at the highest stakes tables in California. Tran lives in Arcadia with his wife and three children.

Tran's road to the bracelet was not an easy one. Among others, Tran beat bracelet winner Steve Billirakis, Erick Lindgren – who he said was his toughest opponent of the tournament –, and his good friend Brandon Adams before facing off against his final foe, Alec „Traheho“ Torelli, a 21-year-old high stakes online pro at his first WSOP.

Tran and Torelli were scheduled to play a best-of-three series and although Tran came blazing out of the gates on the first match, Torelli fought back and opened up a 3-2 chip lead as his large group of supporters cheered on from the bleachers. Within an hour, however, Tran had reversed the chip stacks and continued to apply the pressure until the following hand occurred: Tran raised from the button and called when Torelli re-raised from the big blind. The flop came 4-8-2 rainbow and Torelli moved all-in, prompting a quick call from Tran, who held A-4 for second pair. Torelli showed A-J and the first

match was counted for Tran when the turn and river brought blanks.

The second match started off with Tran gaining the chip lead early then losing it to Torelli after the young pro slow-played a flopped set to take down a big pot. Tran battled back to take a slight lead before the two players got into a raising war on a flop of 7-Q-4 with two clubs. Torelli initially checked the flop but raised when Tran came out with a bet. Tran thought for a few minutes then re-raised, only to have Torelli come back over the top for everything he had left. Tran again went into the tank but when the raise was counted out by the tournament director, Tran called with A-8 of clubs for the nut flush draw and one over card. Torelli tabled Q-10 and needed to dodge a club or an ace, but river was the jack of clubs, giving Tran the flush and knocking out Torelli in second place for a USD 336,896 payday.

During the post-tournament interview Tran graciously congratulated and complimented his opponent, and when ESPN360's Nick Geber pointed out that he finally has a bracelet after numerous deep finishes, Tran joked that he'd „probably retire right here.“

Tran thanked his kids for letting him play on Father's Day and said he'd go home and give them the bracelet, after having a few drinks with his friends, of course.