

Moneymaker wins USD 2.5 million in poker

Las Vegas – It was only fitting that a man named Moneymaker would put down \$ 40 and ultimately walk away with USD 2.5 million and the title of champion Saturday in the 34th annual World Series of Poker.

Known to his friends as „Money,“ Chris Moneymaker, 27, also became the first person to win the prestigious tournament by qualifying on the Internet.

„I got lucky along the way,“ Moneymaker said. „I bluffed a lot during this tournament, but somehow I got away with it.“

Players and experts said Moneymaker’s win will revolutionize poker, solidifying the merger of the Internet and big-name casinos and boosting the game’s popularity.

„This is the sonic boom of poker,“ said Nolan Dalla, media director for the World Series of Poker. „This means anyone in their home can become a poker player.“

Amid cheers of „Go Money,“ the Spring Hill, Tenn., resident faced off against Ihsan „Sam“ Farha in a final round that began Friday afternoon and ended early Saturday, at Binion’s Horseshoe Hotel & Casino.

After seven other players had been eliminated, USD 2.5 million in cash was placed on the green-felt table and the final hands were dealt. Moneymaker, with his metallic wraparound shades, clutched a small crystal in his hand for good luck. Farha of Houston, Texas, had an unlit cigarette in one hand and a tiger figurine by his side.

The game was No-Limit Texas Hold’em, in which the players are dealt two cards each and share up to five additional cards

that lie face up on the table.

Moneymaker drew a five and a four to Farha's jack and ten.

After the dealer laid out a jack, a four and a five on the table, Moneymaker stood holding two pairs to Farha's pair of jacks.

Without knowing Moneymaker's cards, Farha wagered it all – more than USD 1 million in chips. Moneymaker matched the bet and watched the dealer draw the final shared cards, an eight and a five.

The cards gave him a full house (three fives and two fours) and the victory. The accountant threw up his fist and hugged his father, Mike Moneymaker of Knoxville, Tenn.