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When the Odds Work Out

Recent South Jersey Cash 5 Winner Reflects on an Unusual Meeting

TRENTON (Jan. 8, 2025) – “What are the odds?!” That’s what people often exclaim when they come into the New Jersey Lottery office to claim a prize.

To be precise, the odds of winning a Jersey Cash 5 jackpot are one in 1:1,221,759, arguably the best odds a New Jersey draw game has to offer. Indeed, there were 74 Cash 5 jackpots won in 2024.

The odds were likely then that somebody would be saying those four golden words when collecting a December Cash 5 jackpot. That was exactly what the Gloucester County winner of the \$678,674 jackpot—on a Friday the 13th no less—said when visiting the lottery office. The reason for the comment, however, had nothing to do with the jackpot, and it did defy the odds.

Two days after the jackpot was announced, the player was looking to verify that the ticket indeed had the winning numbers. Sure, there’s a Lottery app and ways to find the information online. But a big win is overwhelming and the player wanted to make certain. So, a return visit to where the ticket was purchased was in order. While waiting in line at Township Liquors in Turnersville, right on the border of Camden and Gloucester counties, the player ran into a New Jersey Lottery official. That official put the winner at ease and provided all the instructions a winner needs to know.

“That’s when it became real,” the winner said. “What were the odds?” that the player would run into an off duty lottery official. Those odds can’t be calculated.

But what can be calculated is the impact the numbers 03, 12, 18, 19 and 25 will have on the winner. In 2024, the 74 Cash 5 jackpots totaled \$41,245,682. That’s an average of \$557,374 per winner. While such sums are life altering, they are very much life affirming. Heading into the holidays and amid general economic concerns, the winner had legitimate worries as to whether the family’s house would have to be sold. The \$678,674 jackpot goes a long way to stabilizing things.

“I tear up just thinking about it,” the winner said. “Not having that pressure any more, makes it better.”

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