

Beat: Miscellaneous

U.S. Mega Millions jackpot climbs to \$550 million after Friday drawing

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USPA News - The Mega Millions jackpot climbed to \$550 million on early Saturday after no single ticket matched all six numbers in Friday night's drawing, and the amount is certain to increase even further as lottery fever spreads across large parts of the United States. The jackpot has now rolled over 21 times without a top-prize winner since October 1st, but strong ticket sales for the game are likely to push the jackpot near \$600 million before the next drawing.

The current record for the world's largest ever jackpot was \$656 million split by three winning Mega Millions tickets in Illinois, Kansas and Maryland back in March 2012. The winning numbers for Friday's \$425 million jackpot were 19, 24, 26, 27, 70 and Mega ball 12. Although no one won the big prize, nine people who matched the first five numbers but not the Mega Ball number were able to claim the \$1 million second-tier prize. Those tickets were sold in Colorado, Connecticut and New Jersey, plus two each in Florida, Michigan and New York. Mega Millions is played in 43 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and ticket sales have increased substantially as the jackpot has continued to increase. Players whose ticket matches all six numbers in next Tuesday's drawing will have the option of choosing a pre-tax lump sum cash out of \$295 million or the full prize in 30 annual payments. "The strong sales of Mega Millions tickets mean more than just an exciting jackpot. They mean greater profits to benefit each state in which Mega Millions is played," Paula Otto, executive director of the Virginia Lottery and lead director for the Mega Millions group, said earlier this week. In many states, profits from the lottery are earmarked for education, while other beneficiaries include programs to help the elderly. Recent changes to the game include larger starting jackpots, a million-dollar second prize, and a new matrix of 1 to 75 for the first five numbers and 1 to 15 for the Mega Ball number. The ticket price remains \$1, but the odds of winning the jackpot have fallen to approximately one in 259 million. The odds of winning any of the Mega Millions prizes are approximately 1-in-15.

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