



2012/2013 World Series of Poker Circuit

**Season Nine**

**Palm Beach Kennel Club**

**Palm Beach, Florida**

**Event #7**

**Six-Handed No-Limit Hold'em**

**Buy-In \$300 (+65)**

**Total Entries: 274**

**Prize Pool: \$82,200**

**February 19-20, 2013**

## **Ari Engel Takes the Fifth**

## **Toronto Poker Pro Moves into Three-Way Tie for Second in All-Time WSOP Circuit Wins**

## **Poker Action Continues at Palm Beach with Seventh Gold Ring Event**

**West Palm Beach, FL (February 21, 2013)** – Ari Engel has enjoyed many high points during a poker career that's approaching eight years now, but the thrill of Thursday night's victory at the Palm Beach Kennel Club was especially gratifying.

For one thing, Engel inched one step closer to the career wins lead on the list for most gold rings. Engel now has five golden victories, just one short of the all-time wins leader, Alexandru Masek (who leads with six). With his triumph in the \$580 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament played over two days (Event 7), Engel joined the illustrious company which also includes Mark "Pegasus" Smith, Kyle Cartwright, and Kurt Jewell – each with five wins as well.

Despite the victory which paid the handsome sum of \$26,501 and the satisfaction of defeating a formidable lineup of foes, Engel was most pleased to have some special company in the crowd. Although he's ended up at the champion four previous times, until this night Engel had never won a poker tournament in front of his parents.

Engel made this evening special for everyone – including the entire Engel family which was able to celebrate together for the first time. Both parents live in Florida and were able to come and watch their son play. At each of the previous stops where Engel won a ring, there was no such time to prepare for a trip in such a short time frame. In fact, Engel later noted that it was his parents living here in Florida which motivated him to fly across the country from the previous WSOP Circuit stop in Las Vegas and participate here in South Florida.

Engel now has a remarkable 24 WSOP Circuit cashes to go along with 10 in-the-money finishes in gold bracelet events at the WSOP. His career earnings in WSOP-related events along now totals around \$300,000.

Following his victory, Engel sat down for a short interview, which went as follows:

**Question** – *What does it mean to now be in such select company, with four of the most accomplished players in WSOP Circuit history?*

**Engel** – Well, it's very special. Not very many people have done this. I play a lot of these events, so it's good that one of the grinders ends up getting a few more wins.

**Question** – *Do you think a rivalry is now developing between you, Kyle, Kurt, Mark, and Alex?*

**Engel** – There's a very friendly rivalry between us, sure. Some of these guys have been around for a long time. We see each other a lot and, because we are some of the more aggressive players, we bump heads a lot in tournaments around the country. Like when Alex (Masek) got his sixth gold ring, well I was 18<sup>th</sup> in that event. He busted me, in fact. So, he got some chips that way – even though he already had a lot of chips. So, I made my own contribution I guess you could say. But seriously, competition is good because everyone tries to get better.

**Question** – *Let's talk about where we might be two seasons from now. One of you is most certainly going to have seven or maybe even eight gold rings. If you were handicapping the field of the five of you, who would you make out to be the favorite?*

**Engel** – The question you are asking is not really a skill question. It's a matter of who puts in the most volume. The player who puts in the most volume is the one who is most likely to have the most rings. If you look over the last two months, then I'm the favorite. I mean, I've been putting in the most volume over the past two months, but over time, that's probably not likely to be the case....Alex (Masek) doesn't grind that much, he's more of a West Coast guy. What's funny about Alex is I had not really heard much of him and, all the sudden, he had five rings. He's a phenomenal player. I'm not sure Kyle (Cartwright) plays that many events, but I know Kurt (Jewell) does, so he's probably the favorite. But then, I can sure see Kyle getting excited again and starting to grind. It's really hard to say.

**Question** – What do you figure your chances are to hit a sixth gold ring by end of this season? Is that a reasonable expectation?

**Engel** – No. That's not reasonable to expect to get one more. The real expectation is to get none. But it would be awesome to get one more and I'll certainly be trying.

**Question** – *You have two special fans here with you tonight. Talk about having your parents here with you.*

**Engel** – Yeah, it was awesome having my parents here. I probably would not have come to this stop if they did not live down here. But I was able to combine the two things, visiting and playing and could stay at their house. My dad even made me lunch today, sort of like Daniel Negreanu's mother used to do for him. His mother used to pack a lunch for him and I get that treatment here. No, it's really great. It was awesome having them show up and rail me. Actually, this is the first time that's ever happened. There hasn't been a big enough one yet for them to fly out to, so this one came at just the right time and place. So, this is a phenomenal experience and I'm so glad I won in front of them. It's great.

**Question** – *So, what's next – a WSOP gold bracelet?*

**Engel** – First, I'm already looking at New Orleans (the WSOP National Championship). I'm focusing on getting there and playing my best in the championship.

The final table finishers were as follows:

1st	Ari Engel	LAS VEGAS, NV	\$26,501
2nd	John Rhodes	WEST PALM BEACH, FL	\$16,379
3rd	Eddie Tronolone	PALM BEACH GARDENS, FL	\$11,921
4th	Andrew Kelsall	TAMPA, FL	\$8,816
5th	Abbey Daniels	CORAL SPRINGS, FL	\$6,622
6th	Harold Mahaffey	ANDERSON, SC,	\$5,051
7th	Jurgen Sternad	BAD GAMS, AUSTRIA	\$3,911
8th	John Rhodes	WEST PALM BEACH, FL	\$3,074
9th	David Bellavia	PALM BEACH COUNTY, FL	\$2,452

### **Tournament Notes**

- This was the seventh event of this year's WSOP Circuit being played at the Palm Beach Kennel Club. That means this series has now crossed the halfway point.
- Day One began with 212 players. After 9 hours of play, only 13 players survived to return for the second day.
- The final table included one previous gold ring winner, Ari Engel.
- The final table went about seven hours.

As the most recent gold ring winner, Ari Engel jumps into serious contention in the Casino Champion race for the Palm Beach series. He accumulated 50 points for his victory. However, Engel is most certainly guaranteed a seat anyway, by virtue of his high point total earned this season. At present, Sam Panzica leads all players in the points race, with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place showings.

The player who accumulates the most overall points in the Palm Beach Kennel Club's twelve combined gold ring tournaments will earn the title Casino Champion and shall receive automatic entry into the \$1 Million 2012-13 WSOP National Championship Presented by Southern Comfort 100 Proof. The qualifier will join the winner of the \$1,675 buy-in Main Event (February 23-25), who also wins an automatic seat.

All players who cash in gold ring events receive points that apply to both the Casino Championship race (good for Palm Beach Kennel Club events only) and the season-long race to claim one of the 60 at-large National Championship bids to be awarded to the top point earners throughout the season. More information on the points system is available on WSOP.com.

The 2012-13 WSOP Circuit at the Palm Beach Kennel Club runs through February 25, 2013.

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