

2015-16 World Series of Poker Circuit

Season 12

Choctaw Casino Resort

Durant, OK

Event #2

Pot-Limit Omaha

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

Total Entries: 242

Prize Pool: \$72,600

January 7-8, 2016



Eric Crews Breaks Through at Choctaw

Houston pro wins the gold ring and \$17,787 in Event #2

Choctaw, OK (January 9, 2016) — Eric Crews is the first player to strike gold this year at Choctaw Casino Resort. Crews defeated a field of 242 players in Event #2 to win the ring in the \$365 Pot-Limit Omaha tournament. For his work over the two-day stretch, he also collected \$17,787 in cash and 50 points in the race for Casino Champion at this venue.

Crews is a 38-year-old poker pro from the suburbs of Houston, and he's been playing poker as a job since 2001. He got off to a bit of a sluggish start on Day 1, dropping down to 3,300 chips from his starting stack of 10,000.

"Around Level 6, though," he said, "I started hitting some cards."

Crews went on a late-day rush, bagging up a fifth-place stack with 12 players remaining. His Day 2 started slowly as well, but a monster pot during nine-handed play catapulted him straight to the top of the leaderboard. With one player all in preflop, Crews and two other live players took a K-8-3 flop. All three of them ended up all in as well, with Crews having the others slightly covered.

"We get it all in and turn it over," he explained. "Lo and behold, I'm ahead. Way surprised." Crews showed a modest J-J-T-X for a pair of jacks, and all three opponents had smaller pairs or draws. Two blanks later, and Crews was suddenly the chip leader, earning the rare triple knockout at a most crucial time.

"Naked jacks," he nodded his head, smiling broadly as he thought back through the hand. "I guess I could have picked up a draw on the turn. Backdoor outs, you know? But I like to gamble," he smirked again. "I'm from Houston."

Everyone seems to know “Big E” around these parts, and the final table felt more like a casual Texas home game than a Circuit ring event. Just a few hours after the day began, Crews found himself heads up for the ring against one of the familiar faces at the table.

“Me and Gene play all the time back in Houston,” Crews said of his final opponent, Gene Timberlake. “We play a round of each game, but it usually turns into just Omaha within the first hour. Everyone gets tired of hold’em, you know?”

The Omaha chops showed for both players, as the heads-up duel lasted nearly as long as the rest of the final table prior to that point. The two men played several game-changing pots during the match, trading the chip lead back and forth several times before Crews finally sealed the deal.

One year ago, Crews made his first WSOPC final table right here at Choctaw, limping into the final nine of a \$365 event with a short stack. He had to settle for a ninth-place finish and a small profit in that event, but the second time was the charm for the gregarious pro. This was victory was the second-largest cash of his poker career, and his total live earnings are now approaching the six-figure milestone.

Event #2 was the second of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at Choctaw. The \$365 event drew a field of 242 players, generating a prizepool worth \$72,600. The final 27 players finished in the money.

The tournament began at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 7, and Day 1 concluded with 12 players remaining at the end of Level 17. Day 2 began at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 8, and the last hand was dealt at about 9:30 p.m.

The player who accumulates the most overall points during Choctaw’s 12 ring events earns the title of Casino Champion and receives automatic entry into the WSOP Global Casino Championship. Additionally, all players who cash in ring events earn points that apply toward the season-long race to claim one of the limited at-large bids. More information on the points system is available on WSOP.com.

All rings at Choctaw are furnished by Jostens, the official ring supplier of the 2015-16 WSOP Circuit season.

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