

**2015-16 World Series of Poker
Global Casino Championship
Harrah's Cherokee
Total Entries: 126
Prize Pool: \$1,260,000
August 9-11, 2016**



SAID EL-YOUSFI WINS 2016 GLOBAL CASINO CHAMPIONSHIP

El-Yousfi is the first qualifier from the International Circuit to win the event.

11 August 2016 (Las Vegas) – Said El-Yousfi is the latest WSOP champion. He won the 2016 Global Casino Championship, earning \$343,256.

El-Yousfi is the second non-American in history to win this tournament (formerly known as the National Championship), following Germany's Dominik Nitsche in 2014. El-Yousfi is also the first player born in Africa to win the event – he is a native of Morocco now living in Switzerland.

“I feel wonderful. It's fantastic. It's like the cherry on the cake. Now I have the bracelet and a ring,” El-Yousfi said after his victory. But his good spirits weren't only because he had recently won the event. He was enjoying himself throughout the tournament. “I like to make jokes and have fun. When we got to 15 or 16 players, I was already happy. I played this tournament like I played a tournament with 200 friends.”

The 2015/2016 season was a historic year for the WSOP Circuit. It was the first year of the International Circuit, and the first time the Circuit expanded beyond North America. There were six international stops this year – Campione (Italy), Rozvadov (Czech Republic), Tbilisi (Georgia), Montreal, two at Marrakech. Each stop sent two automatic qualifiers to the Global Casino Championship.

El-Yousfi's success here, in fact his very presence here, is the result of this recent expansion of the Circuit. He qualified for this event by winning Casino Champion honors in Marrakech. The International Circuit will likely host more stops in the future, and we may see many more Said El-Yousfis in the Global Casino Championship over the coming years.

There is one previous bracelet winner born in Morocco – William Kakon, who now resides in Florida.

This once-a-year invitation-only tournament is unique in the poker world. The base prize pool is \$1,000,000, and 100 players each earned a free entry based on their performance on the WSOP Circuit last season. At each Circuit stop, the Main Event winner and the Casino Champion (the player who earns the most points in ring events) receive free seats. And the remaining 100 come from the top players on the Circuit's season-long leaderboard.

For most of the day, this was a two-horse race. Josh Turner and El-Yousfi led virtually the whole way. Turner jumped to the top of the leaderboard on Day 1, and finished the day with a huge lead. He had 302,700, and no one else was even above 200,000. His closest competitor had 187,600. Turner is no stranger to this kind of runaway performance. His biggest tournament success came in the Main Event at the St. Louis Circuit in 2015. In that tournament as well, he amassed a huge lead and never fell further than second in chips.

Turner held onto the lead throughout most of Day 2. Said El-Yousfi finally pulled ahead near the end of Day 2, when he eliminated Brian Senie in 10th place. El-Yousfi carried the lead into Day 3 with 1,351,000. Turner was in second with 906,000. Third place was Cody Pack with 509,000.

Turner and El-Yousfi were so far ahead that no other player broke the 1,000,000-chip mark until Yasin Ahmady doubled through Josh Turner with three players remaining. That hand left Turner short-stacked and propelled Ahmady into second place. Turner was eliminated a few hands later, earning \$150,851 for his third-place finish.

Ahmady dominated the early part of heads-up play, but El-Yousfi pulled ahead and eventually won in a climactic hand. He held ace-high on the flop, and was all-in against his opponent's king-high. He joked afterwards, "When he said, 'Call,' I said to myself, 'Oh my god, I'm going home.'" But it turned out he was ahead, and was still ahead when the hand was finished. The hand secured his victory, and Ahmady finished runner up for \$212,150.

There were officially 126 entries in the 2016 Global Casino Championship – 100 players who qualified for free and 26 who paid the buy-in. By the end of Day 1 (Tuesday), only 48 remained. However, late registration was open until the beginning of Day 2, and two more players joined: Brian Green and five-time bracelet winner Jason Mercier. That brought the total number of entries up to 126, with 50 still in contention. Day 2 ended Wednesday night when there were only six remaining. They returned on Thursday to play the final table on the ESPN stage. The final table was filmed and will be broadcast later this year.

The first player eliminated today was Cody Pack. Pack was an at-large qualifier for this event. He had a monster year on the Circuit this past season. He finished first on the year-long points leaderboard, winning three rings in the process. He capped the year off with a deep run in the Global Casino Championship, earning \$60,427 for his sixth-place finish.

Sean Small was the next player out. He was also an at-large qualifier, finishing the year sixth in points. This is the second time he's come close to bracelet. He also made the final table of a WSOP event in Las Vegas in 2013. He finished fifth today for \$80,483.

Joe Kuether finished in fourth place (\$108,851). Kuether was only player on Day 3 who paid his buy-in directly. Four other direct buy-ins finished in the money: Brian Green (8th), Jesse Martin (12th), Justin Zaki (13th), and Jon Turner (18th).

Here are the results from the TV table. Click here for full results, and here for live updates from the final table.

1 – Said El-Yousfi – \$343,256

2 – Yasin Ahmady – \$212,150

3 – Josh Turner – \$150,851
4 – Joe Kuether – \$109,192
5 – Sean Small – \$80,483
6 – Cody Pack - \$60,427

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