

2016/2017 World Series of Poker Circuit

Season 13

Planet Hollywood Casino

Las Vegas, NV

Event #9

The Main Event

Buy-In: \$1,500 (+\$175)

Total Entries: 528

Prize Pool: \$792,000

September 2-5, 2016



Sean Yu Wins Circuit Main Event at Planet Hollywood

Yu defeats Eli Elezra heads-up to win second ring and \$170,286.

Las Vegas, NV (September 5, 2016) – It’s tough enough to win a World Series of Poker Circuit main event, but it’s truly astonishing feat when you have to go through one of poker’s most successful players to do it.

Sean Yu went heads-up with Eli Elezra on Monday afternoon in the WSOP Circuit main event at Planet Hollywood. Yu defeated the three-time bracelet winner to win his second career ring. He bested a field of 528 players to take home \$170,286, more poker hardware, and an automatic berth into the Global Casino Championship next year.

“It feels amazing,” said Yu after the win. “They run such a great Circuit event here. I’ve been coming out every year and wasn’t successful, but this year, when I started Day 1A, I got crippled down to 3,000 chips [From 20,000 starting stack] and bagged an average stack. Day 2, I bagged up pretty short and was like second from the bottom today. But it just felt like destiny at some point.”

Elezra wasn’t the only tough player at the table by any means. Yu defeated a tough table that included two-time ring winner Kevin Calenzo and super high-roller regular Jake Schindler.

“But the whole final table there was a lot of good players,” said Yu. “But I kind of picked my spots and waited and I tried to ladder up at first because I was at the bottom. But then I got to like five or six players left and I opened up my game.”

Yu opened up his game and began to accumulate chips at a rapid pace as the table got shorter. When he got heads-up with Eli, he decided to change his strategy.

“I think we had like pretty even stacks pretty much [at the start of heads-up play],” said the 41-year-old Los Angeles native. “My strategy was just play small-ball poker and just grind at it. I think it worked out.”

This is Yu’s second Circuit ring and third major title. He won the main event at Harrah’s Southern California two seasons ago for \$101,881 and took this down for an even bigger score. This was the second biggest score of his poker career, but the money at risk didn’t affect his play.

“When I play tournaments, I don’t really think about the money,” said the former professional poker player. “The money is important, but I treat it as just a game. When you think about the money, you can’t make certain plays. You get gun shy. I just try to keep it as a game and do my best to play well.”

Yu made a big change in his personal life that he feels has also helped to further his success in poker. He went back to work full time.

After spending a few years as a poker professional, Yu went back into his old sales job. The job has added balance to his life and restored his desire to play.

“I stay more focused and sharp when I play,” said Yu. “So when I do get a chance to play, I want to play really good.”

The final table was reached just before the end of Day 2 after Tim West was eliminated in 10th place. When play resumed on Day 3, the eliminations piled up at a fairly consistent pace. Colin York hit the rail in ninth place in the first level of the day and there were three more busts in the next level. Keith Doering finished in eighth and Brandon West in seventh. Schindler hit the rail just before the break in sixth and used it as an opportunity to late register the High Roller No-Limit Hold’em event before the start of Day 2.

After the first break of the day, play slowed down a bit and over the course of the next two hours, only Calenzo hit the rail in fifth and four players headed to the second break of the day.

When they got to the next break only two players remained. Arianna Son hit the rail in fourth in the third level of the day and Daniel Needleman was eliminated in third the next level, which left Yu and Elezra heads-up and about even in chips.

The beginning of the heads-up battle saw Elezra get out to the early lead and open up a 2-to-1 chip lead. But Yu worked the chips back into his favor and never relinquishes control. He has a 4-to-1 chip lead before his ace-four trumped Elezra’s king-six to give the title to Yu.

In addition to the ring and the prize money, Yu wins a free entry into the 2017 Global Casino Championship. Every Main Event winner and Casino Champion on the Circuit throughout the season receives a free entry worth \$10,000. The Global Casino Championship will have a minimum prizepool of \$1,000,000.

The tournament began Friday with Day 1A, which attracted 208 entries. Day 1B saw an additional 320 entries, and the 528-entry field generated a prize pool of \$792,000. In-the-money finishers include Sasha Barrese (54th - \$3,041), Joe Kuether (50th - \$3,041), Anthony Spinella (46th - \$3,041), Eric Baldwin (45th - \$3,318), Brent Hanks (44th - \$3,318), Matt Salsberg (41st - \$3,318), Charles “Woody” Moore (39th - \$3,318), Eric Blair (36th - \$3,667), Jack Duong (33rd - \$4,095), Nipun Java (32nd - \$4,095), Dan O’Brien (22nd - \$6,162), Steve Gross (21st - \$7,247), and Jordan Cristos (15th - \$10,423).

The Main Event was the ninth of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at Planet Hollywood. The \$1,675 no-limit hold’em event attracted 528 entries. The total prize pool came to \$792,000 and the top 54 players were paid.

The tournament featured two starting flights beginning Friday, September 2 and Saturday, September 3 at 12 p.m. Flight A boasted 208 entries and advanced 36 while Flight B drew 320 and advanced 66. Both starting flights logged 15 levels of play.

Day 2 restarted Sunday at noon with 102 players remaining. The money bubble burst toward the middle of Level 18 (~2:40 p.m.) and play wrapped toward the end of Level 25 at the nine-handed final table (~12 a.m.).

Day 3 restarted Monday at noon and action concluded at the beginning of Level 32 (~8:30 p.m.) making the total duration of the finale eight hours and 30 minutes.

Final table seating assignments and chip counts:

Seat 1: Jake Schindler – 770,000 (25 BBs)
Seat 2: Kevin Calenzo - 1,635,000 (54 BBs)
Seat 3: Colin York – 580,000 (19 BBs)
Seat 4: Daniel Needleman – 555,000 (18 BBs)
Seat 5: Eli Elezra – 3,165,000 (105 BBs)
Seat 6: Arianna Son – 350,000 (12 BBs)
Seat 7: Sean Yu – 535,000 (17 BBs)
Seat 8: Keith Doering – 1,660,000 (55 BBs)
Seat 9: Brandon West – 1,310,000 (43 BBs)

About the final table:

1st: Sean Yu - \$170,286
Hometown: Los Angeles, CA
WSOP earnings: \$7,767
WSOP Circuit earnings: \$106,533

2nd: Eli Elezra - \$105,281
Hometown: Henderson, NV
WSOP earnings: \$1,741,011
WSOP Circuit earnings: \$0

3rd: Daniel Needleman - \$76,911
Hometown: Long Island City, NY
WSOP earnings: \$151,433
WSOP Circuit earnings: \$6,028

4th: Arianna Son - \$57,016
Hometown: Las Vegas, NV
WSOP earnings: \$14,195
WSOP Circuit earnings: \$0

5th: Kevin Calenzo - \$42,879
Hometown: New Hartford, NY
WSOP earnings: \$173,082
WSOP Circuit earnings: \$345,316

6th: Jake Schindler - \$32,710
Hometown: Philadelphia, PA
WSOP earnings: \$515,856
WSOP Circuit earnings: \$41,881

7th: Brandon West - \$25,304
Hometown: Las Vegas, NV
WSOP earnings: \$4,627
WSOP Circuit earnings: \$115,061

8th: Keith Doering - \$19,855
Hometown: Brownnton, MN
WSOP earnings: \$0
WSOP Circuit earnings: \$15,529

9th: Colin York - \$15,800
Hometown: Las Vegas, NV
WSOP earnings: \$37,779
WSOP Circuit earnings: \$0

Here is the list of gold ring winners from Lumiere Place:

EVENT #1: Hayden Aalvik defeated 556 players (\$365 NLH Re-Entry) for \$35,026
EVENT #2: Dale Beaudoin defeated 71 players (\$580 NLH) for \$12,071
EVENT #3: Vincent Moscati defeated 83 players (\$365 NLH) for \$7,968
EVENT #4: James Mink defeated 170 players (\$365 NLH Six-Max) for \$13,769
EVENT #5: Sean Marshall defeated 100 players (\$580 NLH) for \$14,997
EVENT #6: Ben Palmer defeated 339 players (\$365 NLH Monster Stack) for \$23,389
EVENT #7: Caleb Shumard defeated 57 players (\$580 PLO) for \$10,686
EVENT #8: Josh Mammon defeated 127 players (\$365 NLH Turbo) for \$10,668
EVENT #9: Sean Yu defeated 528 players (\$1,675 NLH Main Event) for \$170,286
EVENT #10: Jim Willerson defeated 68 players (\$580 NLH) for \$11,899
EVENT #11: Erik Sagstrom defeated 26 players (\$5,300 NLH High Roller) for \$65,000
EVENT #12: Josh Turner defeated 149 players (\$365 NLH Turbo) for \$12,516

Josh Turner of St Louis, Mo. earned Casino Champion honors of the Planet Hollywood series following 14th, ninth, and a win in preliminary events. In all, Turner earned 75 points toward the 12-tournament race, which put him in a tie with Kindah Sakkal for the lead. Turner won slightly more money throughout the tournament and edged her out in the tiebreaker. The performance punches Turner's ticket to the 2017 Global Casino Championship where he'll compete alongside the Planet Hollywood Main Event champion, Sean Yu, for a piece of an up-to \$2 million prize pool and a gold bracelet.

All players who cashed in ring events earned points that apply toward the season-long race to claim one of 56 at-large National Championship bids awarded to the top point earners throughout the season. More information on the points system is available on WSOP.com.

For more information about the WSOP Circuit, be sure to follow us on Twitter at [@WSOP](https://twitter.com/WSOP) or check out WSOP.com.

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