

2016/2017 World Series of Poker Circuit

Season 13

The Bicycle Hotel and Casino

Bell Gardens, Ca.

Event #5

No-Limit Hold'em

Buy-In: \$500 (+\$80)

Total Entries: 109

Prize Pool: \$54,500

December 6-7, 2016



Sohale Khalili Scores First Live Win At The Bike

Longtime tournament pro earns first outright live win and ring, along with \$16,345 in \$580 no-limit hold'em

Bell Gardens, Ca. (December 7, 2016) — Sohale Khalili has been playing poker tournaments professionally for about a decade, but a live tournament win has eluded him throughout his career.

That changed on Wednesday afternoon after he topped a field of 109 entries to earn \$16,345 and his first Circuit ring in the \$580 no-limit hold'em. The 31-year-old has had countless wins online and several deep runs in WSOP Bracelet events at the Rio for much more money, but the win at the Bicycle Hotel and Casino plugs a hole in his poker resume.

"A win is a win," said Khalili after the victory. "I have a 12th, I have a 19th, I have two deep runs in the [WSOP] Main Event. I've got an online bracelet, but I don't think I've had an outright live win. So yeah, it feels great."

Khalili has the typical poker story for most pros his age. He's a product of the Moneymaker boom and jumped into playing poker with his friends in high school and college. He hopped online during his time as a history major at UCLA and never looked back.

"I did that and paid my way through college," said Khalili of his online poker exploits. "So I did that and it paid more than a traditional job, so I stuck to it. I've been playing poker ever since."

Khalili never held an office job and has been supporting himself playing poker for his entire adult life, but that didn't stop him from keeping his options open.

He finished his undergraduate degree at UCLA in history and continued his education by getting his masters at the University of Southern California. He doesn't plan on having to use those credentials, but he likes to be prepared for anything that comes his way.

"I did it just in case," said Khalili. "But why would I do that when I have this. Why would I work a traditional job and answer emails all day and work in a cubicle, when I can travel the world and play poker."

Khalili spent most of his poker career playing online and after Black Friday, he headed north of the border to continue his online career in Vancouver, Canada. He spent his time playing heads-up sit n'gos and multi-table tournaments.

"I've played cash [games] maybe three or four times in my life," said Khalili. "I only play tournaments and high-stakes heads-up. That's it."

About a year ago, however, Khalili came back to the United States. He didn't want to be outside the country anymore. He made his way back to the Los Angeles area and has been playing live tournaments ever since.

Along with the money and the ring, Khalili earned 50 points and jumps into the logjam at the top of the Casino Championship leaderboard. Khalili is tied with four other players, all who have won rings in the series, with 50 points and is in second place. They all trail Greg Armand's 52.5 points.

This was the fifth of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at the Bicycle Hotel and Casino. The \$580 no-limit hold'em event attracted 109 players. The total prize pool came to \$54,500 and the top 12 finishers were paid.

The tournament began on Tuesday, December 6 at noon and a final table was reached around 11:00 p.m. Play wrapped up for the day around midnight and the final six players came back on Wednesday, December 7 at 1 p.m. Khalili emerged victorious around 4 p.m., making the total duration of the finale about five hours.

Here is the list of gold ring winners from the Bicycle Hotel and Casino:

EVENT #1: Alex Massman defeated 242 players (\$365 NLH) for \$17,795
EVENT #2: Jerry Rojas defeated 171 players (\$365 NLH Bounty) for \$9,230
EVENT #3: TJ Thondup defeated 1,245 players (\$365 NLH Monster Stack) for \$77,300
EVENT #4: Greg Sanchez defeated 122 players (\$365 NLH) for \$10,245
EVENT #5: Sohale Khalili defeated 109 players (\$580 NLH) for \$16,345

The player who accumulates the most overall points during the Bike's 12 combined gold ring tournaments earns the title 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 60 expected 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.

For additional information please contact:

Steve Schult (WSOP Media Coordinator) at Steve.Schult1@gmail.com.