

## **2016/2017 World Series of Poker Circuit**

**Season 13**

**The Bicycle Hotel and Casino**

**Bell Gardens, Ca.**

**Event #7**

**No-Limit Hold'em**

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

**Total Entries: 183**

**Prize Pool: \$54,900**

**March 10-11, 2017**



### **Joe Marcal Wins Ring in \$365 No-Limit Hold'em**

**Poker and chess enthusiast gets a second chance at life with a kidney transplant from a friend before winning ring in Los Angeles.**

**Bell Gardens, Ca. (March 11, 2017)** — Joe Marcal bested a field of 183 entries to earn \$14,275 and his first Circuit ring on Saturday night in the \$365 no-limit hold'em event at the Bicycle Casino.

He's happy about the win, but regardless of what happens to Marcal in the future, he's already freerolling in life.

"The big thing about me is that I had a kidney transplant," said Marcal. "My friend Mark Shulman gave me a kidney about four years ago."

Marcal struggled to find the words to describe the situation and got a little choked up at the thought of continuing to speak. He reached for a pad of paper and a pen and wrote down exactly what he was trying to say.

"Mark staked me in life!"

Shulman and Marcal have been friends since high school, but after Shulman offered up his kidney for Marcal's health, the two have become more like family.

"It's brought us closer together like brothers," said Marcal about their relationship post-transplant.

The 52-year-old from Oak Park, California was on dialysis for quite some time before Shulman donated his own organ. The dialysis treatment really wore Marcal down and he's just happy to be off of it and working with a fully functional kidney.

"I don't know if you know anybody on dialysis, but your brain doesn't work as well. Nothing works as well," said Marcal about what it was like to go through his treatment. "He gave me a kidney and I had a rough go of it for about three years. But for the last year, I've been stable. Everyday is great."

Even with Shulman's kidney, Marcal will never be in the clear. For now, he's just happy that he's able to get out, play poker, and live a normal life.

"It's never a clean bill of health," said Marcal. "It's not like you get it and it's fixed. It's like you get it and you're as fixed as you're going to be. And it's just way better than dialysis."

Aside from getting an organ from his best friend, Marcal is grateful for the love and support of his family.

"My wife puts up with a lot," said Marcal. "I owe her a lot. You know how it is being the wife of a poker player. She's great. I don't know what I would do without her."

Marcal and his wife also have two kids who Marcal couldn't say enough good things about. Over the last eight months, Marcal's son had been starting to get involved in chess and really taking the game seriously.

In an effort to have a father-son activity and help his son reach his potential, Marcal picked up the game as well and has been playing with all of his friends and family. Playing chess with his son helped Marcal hone some skills that translated into an improved poker game.

"I think it's important to think about what the other person is doing and how they are playing," said Marcal about poker in general. "A lot of the time when you're playing, you just get into a routine and just think 'Oh, I have this, so I do this,' and in chess, you are always thinking about what your opponent is doing."

It was his son that got him into chess, but he might not have entered the event if it weren't for a few of his friends having success at some big tournaments in San Jose earlier in the week.

"I was inspired to play by my friends who cashed at Bay 101," said Marcal. "I made the hour drive down here to play and now I have a ring."

Along with the money and the ring, Marcal earns 50 points towards the Casino Champion race. Danny Illingworth is in the lead with 62.5 points and is trailed by William Wolf with 55 points and Brian Vickers with 52.5 points. The winner of the Casino Championship will earn an automatic seat into the Global Casino Championship this August in Cherokee, North Carolina.

This was the seventh of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at the Bicycle Hotel and Casino. The \$365 no-limit hold'em six-max attracted 183 entries. The total prize pool came to \$54,900 and the top 21 finishers were paid.

The tournament began on Friday, March 10 at noon and a final table was reached around just before midnight. The players bagged up a few minutes later and came back to play down to a winner at 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 11. The final hand was dealt around 8:00 p.m., making the total duration of the finale about seven hours.

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

EVENT #1: Fredrick Arni defeated 1,472 players (\$365 NLH Monster Stack) for \$87,010

EVENT #2: William Wolf defeated 127 players (\$365 NLH) for \$10,665

EVENT #3: Danny Illingworth defeated 121 players (\$580 NLH) for \$16,495

EVENT #4: Joseph Hoffman defeated 123 players (\$365 Omaha H/L) for \$10,330

EVENT #5: Albert Ng defeated 187 players (\$365 NLH) for \$15,585

EVENT #6: Neil Ho defeated 198 players (\$365 NLH Six-Max) for \$16,345

EVENT #7: Joe Marcal defeated 183 players (\$365 NLH) for \$14,275

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](http://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](http://WSOP.com).

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