



WSOP CIRCUIT 2017-18 MAIN EVENT REPORT

Circuit Stop:	Harrah's Cherokee	Date:	10 August 2017
Event:	Global Casino Championship	Entries:	124
Buy-in:	\$10,000	Prizepool:	\$1,090,000

SEAN YU CAPTURES GLOBAL CASINO CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE

Two-time ring winner adds bracelet and \$296,941 to his resume with GCC victory.

Sean Yu, a two-time World Series of Poker Circuit ring winner, added a more prestigious piece of WSOP jewelry to his collection on Thursday afternoon.

Yu won his first WSOP bracelet by taking down the 2017 Global Casino Championship at Harrah's Cherokee. He defeated a field of 124 players and Alexander Lakhov heads-up to win \$294,941 in the Championship event that wraps up the 2016/2017 Circuit season.

"It feels amazing," said Yu after his win. "It's like 100 times better [than a regular Circuit win]. I mean, to be back at the Global Casino Championship for the second time. The first time was a big disappointment. The second time obviously worked out for me, so I'm like super happy. I have my amazing friends from L.A. It's just amazing."

Not only did Yu's friends from Los Angeles support him at the final table, but they also cashed in the event as well. Nikhil Gera and Sohale Khalil finished ninth and 18th, respectively. Gera earned \$31,189 and Khalili netted \$14,084.

Gera qualified after winning the Circuit main event at the Bicycle Casino and Khalili amassed enough points throughout the season to finish in the top 50 on the leaderboard and get an automatic seat. Being able to go through this experience with his friends from home made the victory even sweeter for Yu.

“You know, just qualifying for this event alone isn’t easy,” said Yu. “But for two of my other buddies to come here and all three of us cash is just amazing. I was super happy. This is why we play poker.”

Yu was an automatic qualifier for this event and got a free seat after winning the main event at the WSOP Circuit at Planet Hollywood. He qualified for this event two seasons ago after winning the WSOP Circuit main event at Harrah’s Southern California.

Having had the experience of playing this event once before, Yu had a better idea of what to expect this time around.

“The first time around, I was kind of shell-shocked, you know?” said Yu. “There were a lot of good players, a lot of champions, casino champions and main event champions. It was the first time, so I was kind of like raw, I guess. But it was a good experience for me. I didn’t cash, so it was a disappointment, but I learned from that experience.”

The Global Championship draws a smaller, more elite field than other events.

Players can earn an automatic seat into the event by winning the main event or casino champion title at any Circuit stop or by finishing in the top 50 of the Circuit leaderboard by accumulating points at Circuit stops all year long. By finishing in the top 100 of the previous year’s WSOP Player of the Year race or by winning a ring at any stop over the previous Circuit season, players can have the option to buy-in for \$10,000.

Over the last two years, the Circuit expanded and had more international stops, allowing more automatic qualifiers into the event. This year’s runner-up, Alexander Lakhov earned his seat by winning the Casino Championship at King’s Casino in the Czech Republic. Lakhov, who came into the final table with the chip lead, earned \$183,527.

The Russian was never able to expand on his chip lead. His chip stack was mostly static throughout most of the final table, while Yu’s stack was on the rise the whole day. Yu and Josh Reichard were doing all of the heavy lifting at the final table. They traded off scoring knockouts until Reichard was eliminated in third.

Dylan Linde, who qualified for the event via a main event win at the Horseshoe in Hammond, hit the rail in sixth at the hands of Reichard when his ace-queen couldn’t best Reichard’s ace-king.

Jason Mercier, the lone player at the final table who bought in for \$10,000, was eliminated by the eventual champion. They got all the chips into the middle preflop with Yu in the lead with his pocket kings against Mercier’s ace-queen. Mercier put a bad beat on Yu and his sixth career WSOP bracelet will have to wait at least one more tournament.

Jesse Cohen, the casino champion from one of last season’s stops here at Cherokee, finished in fourth at the hands of Reichard. Cohen moved all in on the button with pocket sevens and ran into Reichard’s pocket tens.

At the outset of three-handed play, Reichard, Lakhov and Yu were all fairly close in chips, but when Yu picked off Reichard's three-barrel bluff to send him home in third, it looked like it was all but over.

Reichard three-bet preflop, bet the flop, bet the turn, and bet the river with king-high on an 8-6-3-3-4 runout. Yu called him down with a Ah6h and sent the casino champion from Council Bluffs home in third.

"That hand was kind of crazy because I had just bluff caught Lakhov a few hands before that," said Yu. "[On the turn] I thought he was trying to get me off the hand because I could easily have a three there, you know? So, if he has a value hand, he is probably going to check and pot control.

"On the river, my hand is just a bluff catcher. I don't think he is making this play with an overpair. He's either got a boat or he's got nothing. So, it's a polarized play. I read him a little bit when I was in the tank. I started talking to him and he was talking back. He initiated a conversation and I thought this guy was up to no good. I was going to snap-call him, but I thought about it a little longer and then called."

That pot gave Yu a nearly 3-to-1 chip advantage going into heads-up play with Lakhov. It didn't take much of a heads-up battle for Yu to secure the win. Of the seven hands that were played heads-up, Yu won six of them.

In the final hand, Yu check-called a flop bet with bottom pair and turned a flush draw. He check-called again and check-raised all in on the river when he made his flush. Lakhov snap-called with top pair and top kicker to finish in second.

From the outside looking in, it seemed like it was Yu's tournament to win. He felt the same way and came to Cherokee prepared to be in the winner's circle.

"I told the ESPN reporter before this that I think this was destiny," Yu said. "I felt it yesterday on Day 2. I just felt it. I even brought this shirt. You know, I don't really wear collared shirts when I'm playing poker, but I had the intention of making this final table and it just came to reality."

MEET THE LATEST WSOP BRACELET WINNER

Name:	Sean Yu	Age:	42
Nationality:	USA	Profession:	Sales
Birthplace:	Los Angeles, CA	WSOP Bracelets:	1
Current Residence:	Los Angeles, CA	Previous WSOP Circuit Rings:	2

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