



## WSOP CIRCUIT 2017-18 MAIN EVENT REPORT

Circuit Stop:	Choctaw Casino and Resort	Date:	15 January 2018
Event:	No-Limit Hold'em Main Event	Entries:	1,249
Buy-in:	\$1,675	Prizepool:	\$1,873,500

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### JASON STRASSER WINS CHOCTAW MAIN EVENT

*Poker pro turned hedge fund manager wins second ring and \$332,539.*

In his younger days, Jason Strasser was one of the best no-limit hold'em players on the planet. Playing mostly online, he won millions in his early 20s after graduating from Duke. He left a full-time career on the felt after to take a job on Wall Street and eventually start his own hedge fund, but it's clear he hasn't lost a step.

On Monday night, Strasser earned his second Circuit ring and \$332,589 and a seat in the 2018 Global Casino Championship by winning the WSOP Circuit Choctaw main event. He defeated a field of 1,249 entries who all put up the \$1,675 buy-in and bested Krzysztof Stybaniewicz heads-up, denying the Colorado native a third ring of his own.

"It's great," said Strasser after his win. "I mean, honestly, I don't get to play much poker these days and the final table, the way it played out, we were three-handed for a long time and it was really, really fun because it wasn't 20 big blind push/shove. It was actual, real poker. I really enjoyed my opponents and getting into the flow of it. I had a great time."

Strasser's initial career move away from poker and to Wall Street moved him up the East Coast and into New York City. While living in the Northeast and working for Morgan Stanley, Strasser earned his first ring in August of 2013 after a main event win at Foxwoods in Connecticut.

When he decided to start his own hedge fund, he made a connection that would help him get more funding and get the project off the ground. That connection prompted a move to Oklahoma City in 2014 and occasional trips to Choctaw to take part in their larger tournament series.

"We have an office in New York and we have an office in Oklahoma City," said Strasser about his hedge fund, Caption Partners. "The reason is that there is a gentleman that passed away a couple years ago. His name is Aubrey McClendon. He invested in our hedge fund, bought part of the business and he was

like 'Hey, come to Oklahoma City and I'll help you raise money.' I moved down there, I loved it, and bought a house. This is my home casino, basically. I try and come here and play the Circuit once a year or something like that."

Strasser doesn't play anywhere near the volume of hands that he used to during the early days of the Moneymaker boom. That hasn't curbed his love of the game, though. He still has the desire to improve and stay up-to-date on the emerging trends in poker strategy.

After taking his ability for granted, he had an epiphany during a deep run in the WSOP Main Event at the Rio which reinvigorated him to put in the work to get better and compete at the tables.

"I had an experience where I played the Main Event three years ago," said Strasser. "I got to like Day 4 and was like 'Whatever I was doing before isn't working and the game has passed me by.' Whenever I had free time from work, I would fire up some poker videos. I would watch Run it Once videos, talk to some players that were good and I kind of worked on my game for the first time in like six or seven years."

He made the commitment to study and get better. He downloaded a lot of the software that some of the top pros were using to run simulations and hand equities and would try and spend an hour or two a night improving his poker game after he was done grinding it out in the office.

"I downloaded the software and started playing with it," he said. "I started getting an idea for what people are doing. For me, I don't get to play a lot of poker, but if I have an hour here or there, I'm popping on a poker video."

Since the 33-year-old doesn't rely on the game for his income, Strasser is able to enjoy the game and the competition that comes with it. Everybody acknowledges that the game is slowly getting tougher as players are learning more and getting better, but that made the final table enjoyable for Strasser.

Compared to his final table at Foxwoods, he felt that the competition was much tougher, and it was evident in the three-handed battle that lasted for 142 hands between Strasser, Stybaniewicz and Viet Vo. After going from nine players down to three in 80 hands, it would be several hours before Vo hit the rail in third place.

With stacks being uncharacteristically deep, it allowed for multiple levels of thought and some advanced tournament strategy. With three very talented players going at it, there were several big swings and chips were being moved around in several different directions. Strasser's mindset helped him block out any distractions and navigate his way to victory.

"My attitude is that I just look at every hand and try to figure out how I can play this hand the best that I can," said Strasser. "Whatever happened before, whatever happens after, it doesn't matter. There were some crazy ups and downs today. Whether it's been 10 hours or if it was really quick, it doesn't matter. I just try to focus on that hand. What's in front of me, what's my stack and what's the best decision. I really just try to drown it all out and sort of just live in that one moment in the hand."

Along with the deep stacks and advanced play, Strasser enjoyed the pace of the game. In a modern poker landscape where tanking has become commonplace, the players at this final table weren't wasting much time before they act.

“I think the pace of play was really good. People weren’t really tanking as much as normal. It was a really enjoyable tournament,” said Strasser.

This was one of the more accomplished final tables put together on the Circuit this season. Along with the top three finishers who were all looking earn their second or third ring, there was a lot of talent that busted before them.

Trung Pham, who made his return to poker last year came back onto the scene with a six-figure score and a ring in last November’s \$365 re-entry event at Choctaw, finished in fourth. Will Berry, who won the Hard Rock Tulsa main event last March and the Horseshoe Hammond high roller event, finished eighth, and Jeffrey Trudeau put on another clinic at Choctaw. The 23-year-old finished ninth and won his fourth ring earlier in the series after winning the Casino Champion crown in Choctaw last November.

Final Table Results:

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Jason Strasser - \$332,539
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Krzysztof Stybaniewicz - \$206,085
- 3<sup>rd</sup>: Viet Vo - \$151,248
- 4<sup>th</sup>: Trung Pham - \$114,284
- 5<sup>th</sup>: Gil George - \$87,211
- 6<sup>th</sup>: Mark Van Keirsbilck - \$67,128
- 7<sup>th</sup>: Casey Brown - \$41,180
- 8<sup>th</sup>: Will Berry - \$41,180
- 9<sup>th</sup>: Jeffrey Trudeau - \$32,824

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## MEET THE LATEST WSOP CIRCUIT RING WINNER

Name: Jason Strasser	Age: 33
Nationality: American	Profession: Hedge Fund Owner
Birthplace: Durham, NC	WSOP Bracelets: 0
Current Residence: Oklahoma City, OK	Previous WSOP Circuit Rings: 1

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