



WSOP CIRCUIT 2017-18 MAIN EVENT REPORT

Circuit Stop:	Bicycle Hotel and Casino	Date:	13 March 2018
Event:	No-Limit Hold'em Main Event	Entries:	705
Buy-in:	\$1,675	Prizepool:	\$1,873,500

DAVID PHAM WINS BIKE MAIN EVENT

Los Angeles can't tame 'The Dragon,' who wins \$216,790 and his first ring to go with his three WSOP bracelets.

On Tuesday evening at the Bicycle Hotel and Casino, David Pham proved that the old school poker pros can still compete at some of the highest levels of poker.

Pham defeated a field of 705 entries to earn \$216,790 in the World Series of Poker Circuit Bicycle Hotel and Casino main event. He wins his first Circuit ring and a seat into the 2018 Global Casino Championship to go along with a resume that includes three WSOP bracelets.

The win in Los Angeles continues his recent hot streak at the poker tables. Just last week, he won a major title in Las Vegas for over \$240,000 and last summer at the WSOP, he won his third bracelet in a \$1,500 no-limit hold'em for \$391,960.

"I've had a great last 10 days," said Pham after his win. "I'm feeling great and I played very comfortable. Even now, up in my mind, I know I'm going to be right there. I'm feeling great for so long. I don't rush my mind to win and I know that there are a lot of good, young players. Now, there are so many tough, young players and I feel like I'm up there with them."

Pham acknowledges that some of the younger players have made the game much tougher than when he first started logging WSOP results in the pre-Moneymaker era. Instead of writing off these young players for doing things different, Pham realized he needed to adapt to survive.

Part of adapting was getting a better understanding for what those players were doing.

"When I play someone good, I always think which street he plays good and I pick up what they are all doing," said Pham. "Maybe it's preflop or on the flop that they play real good. I try and combine them together in my mind and try to play better when I sit down with them."

The 51-year-old legend of the game started taking these improvements more seriously when he started to see other players that he liked and respected falling by the wayside.

“I look at all of my friends like Men Nguyen and Scotty Nguyen and all of the great pros for a long time and lately, they couldn’t score,” said Pham. “And I figured out it’s our style. We probably have to do something different. Of course, when you win a tournament, you have to run hot a little bit.”

The results speak for themselves. The work he put into his game is paying off in spades, but a move across the Pacific Ocean to Southern California also had a substantial impact. From 2011-2016, Pham and his family were living full-time in Vietnam.

It was in 2016 that they decided to move to California and live there full-time. Being able to grind full-time instead of taking long trips across a large body of water allowed him to put in the work to improve.

“Every year, I come up for the World Series [of Poker], but I moved my wife and kids out here, so I can play full-time,” said Pham. “So, my mind is fresh, and I can concentrate a lot.”

The one thing that nobody can take away from Pham is the amount of experience he has on the felt. Pham’s first career WSOP cash came back in 2000 in a \$2,000 no-limit hold’em event. He’s been playing at the game’s highest levels for nearly two decades.

There are only a handful of people in the world with that kind of experience and regardless of how tough the game becomes; his experience will allow him to succeed where others can’t.

“I think experience is more of a way to win than the young gun’s aggressive style,” said Pham. “My experience, sometimes I just wait for people to make mistakes. Sometimes, cards come up random and you have to play a hand sometimes, but you have to wait for them to make a mistake.”

After bagging up 120,000 on Day 1A, Pham enjoyed a day off at home with his family on Sunday and then came back on Monday in the middle of the pack. He finished Day 2 fourth in chips with 11 players remaining. Regardless of where he stood on any day of the tournament, he had confidence that he was going to make a run at the title.

“I came back on Monday with a medium stack, but I felt it,” said Pham. “Sometimes you can feel that you are going to get deep, but when you get deep, you got to know how get in there.”

Pham started out fourth in chips and continued to hang near the top of the chip counts as they lost Scott Saunders in 11th and Brett Murray in 10th to get to the final table. He stayed quiet until the table started to get short-handed. Then, it was Pham, Owen Crowe and Tom Braband who started to pull away from the pack.

Pham’s quiet start to the final table was part of an overall strategy change in his play. He was always known as one of the more aggressive players at the table. Lately, he’s been trying to switch it up a little more often.

“I’ve been adjusting my game a lot,” said Pham. “A lot of people may not know. They think that David bluffs a lot, plays a lot of hands, but I adjust and change gears. I’ve been updating with all of the young guys. I have to figure out how to get to win again because there are a lot of good players. So, I change gears and mess with them a little bit. Not that I play tight, but I’m very sure that I’m tighter than I was 15 years ago.”

He was tight in the early going as Kevin Gimble, Martin Carnero and Adam Swan were eliminated in ninth, eighth and seventh place, respectively. Adam Miller hit the rail in sixth and five-handed play lasted a while before Kristy Arnett and Nick Palma were eliminated in fifth and fourth place, respectively.

It was down to Braband, Crowe and Pham, who were battling atop the chip counts all day long. Braband started out with a massive chip lead three-handed, but Pham eliminated Crowe with pocket eights against pocket fours all in preflop to close the gap and go heads-up with Braband.

He quickly regained a slight chip lead against Braband and eventually finished him off with pocket tens against pocket fours. Braband earned \$134,145 for his runner-up finish.

Regardless of how much success he accrues, Pham plans to continue learning and improving every time he sits down at the poker table.

“In my mind, I think everybody thinks a different way,” said Pham. “And I think a different way. I learn a lot from a lot of people every day when I sit down with them at the table. I feel great, though. I always feel like I’m going to win.”

Final Table Results:

1st: David Pham - \$216,790
2nd: Tom Braband - \$134,145
3rd: Owen Crowe - \$98,390
4th: Nick Palma - \$73,170
5th: Kristy Arnett - \$55,150
6th: Adam Miller - \$42,120
7th: Adam Swan - \$32,590
8th: Martin Carnero - \$25,550
9th: Kevin Gimble - \$20,285

MEET THE LATEST WSOP CIRCUIT RING WINNER

Name: David Pham
Nationality: Vietnamese
Birthplace: Vietnam
Current Residence: Cerritos, CA

Age: 51
Profession: Professional Poker Player
WSOP Bracelets: 3
Previous WSOP Circuit Rings: 0

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