



WSOP CIRCUIT 2017-18 MAIN EVENT REPORT

Circuit Stop:	Horseshoe Baltimore	Date:	7 May 2018
Event:	No-Limit Hold'em Main Event	Entries:	513
Buy-in:	\$1,675	Prizepool:	\$769,500

MIKE JUKICH WINS THE HORSESHOE BALTIMORE MAIN EVENT FOR \$165,438 AND HIS FIRST CIRCUIT RING

An impromptu trip to Baltimore has Mike Jukich leaving with his first World Series of Poker Circuit ring and a six-figure payout.

Mike Jukich wasn't going to come play in the Horseshoe Baltimore Main Event, but it's a good thing he did because he took it down on Monday evening, locking up the first place prize of \$165,438, his first World Series of Poker Circuit Ring, and a seat in the Global Casino Championship.

"It was last minute that I even decided to come," Jukich said. "I was playing in my home game, back in Lynchburg, VA on Friday night and I got the okay to come up here and play. They were gonna take action in me. They believed in me and I was pretty confident in myself."

But it wasn't an easy ride for Jukich the whole way. On day one, he found himself down to just ten big blinds quickly. But he found some early help from someone else who would make the final table, Chris Caruso.

"I wanna say I got off to a good start, but I hit some bumps in the road," Jukich said. "Then I doubled up, and I doubled up again. Actually, the guy at the table, Chris Caruso, he doubled me up twice. We were joking that I owe it to him that I'm still around in the tournament."

Once Day 2 started, Jukich just started rolling. He quickly moved from 137,000 to 300,000 and back to 150,000. It was later in the day that he found himself in a massive pot holding pocket kings against the pocket queens of Chris Asaro. He held up and that vaulted him into the chip lead at that point. He held onto it all the way for most of Day 2, finishing the night second in chips to Jeremy Stein.

“That helped a ton,” Jukich said about the kings against queens hand. “The first hand of the day was kind of a disaster, but I went from 10k to 300k in like four hands. I just kept speaking to the guys in my group chats and they kept me positive. They were saying this was my tournament and that they had a vision for me to win this tournament.”

The final table was mostly smooth sailing for Jukich. He stayed out of trouble as players started falling left and right. But right at the start, Jukich ran into a cooler. Paul Fisher flopped trip aces against Jukich who flopped aces up. But Jukich stayed calm and collected despite the beat, not losing his focus.

“It was a pretty cooler spot,” Jukich said. “I knew he had aces too, but I just can’t fold there.”

The first two players were actually eliminated by James St. Hilaire who took out Ari Eiblum with ace-queen against ace-jack, as well as Paul Fisher with ace-king against ace-jack. Kyle Jensen was the next to fall when he moved all in with ace-six against Chris Caruso’s queen-eight, and Caruso rivered a pair of eights to send him to the rail.

It was Jukich’s savior who dropped in sixth place, when he was taken out by James St. Hilaire as well. Jukich took a couple pots from Caruso to put him in the danger zone and Caruso eventually moved all in with ace-five, running into St. Hilaire’s ace-jack. He did not improve and he was sent to the rail in fifth.

Jukich actually didn’t eliminate a single player at the final table until the final three, and only found himself all in and at risk once. Chris Conrad and Kyle Adams were both eliminated by Jeremy Stein in quick succession, bringing the players down to three-handed play. From there, Jukich dropped to the shortest stack after losing several small pots but he won in an important spot against St. Hilaire. Jukich got his jacks in against St. Hilaire’s pocket nines, held up and never looked back.

It seemed like Jukich won every pot from that point on. He eliminated St. Hilaire with ace-jack against nine-ten suited and just a few hands later, he played a flip for it all against Jeremy Stein for the win. With that his rail came running down from the audience to congratulate him, a rail that included another poker pro, Alex Rocha. A player that Jukich attributes a lot of his success too.

“He helps [my game] a lot, man,” Jukich said. “A lot of credit to him too. He, Asher Coniff, Joe Liberta. They are like my main guys that I talk a lot of poker with. They’ve kind taken me under their wing and showed me a ton about poker. I look up to them.”

For many of the grinders today, getting another ring, or a trophy doesn’t mean much, but not for Jukich.

“They’ll think it’s kind of silly, but it did mean a lot to me to actually win one,” Jukich said. “I like that kind of stuff, like trophies. It’s really cool, even if it’s just the sentimental value.”

But it’s definitely about more than just the trophies for Jukich. He has a fiancé and a two-year old son named Ryker.

“I just have to give a shout out to my fiancé, Ashley and my son, Ryker,” Jukich said. “That’s who I do this for.”

Along with the first place prize money and the WSOPC ring, Mike Jukich will also receive a seat in the Global Casino Championship.

MEET THE LATEST WSOP CIRCUIT RING WINNER

Name:	Mike Jukich	Age:	34
Nationality:	USA	Profession:	Poker Pro
Birthplace:	Lynchburg, VA	WSOP Bracelets:	0
Current Residence:	Lynchburg, VA	Previous WSOP Circuit Rings:	0

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