



**2011/2012 World Series of Poker Circuit
Caesars Atlantic City
Event #3**

No-Limit Hold'em

Buy-In: \$500 (+55)

Total Entries: 253

Total Prize Pool: \$122,705

March 4-5, 2012

Official Final Results:

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|----|---------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| 1 | Brandon Croft | Sumter, SC, US | \$30,062 |
| 2 | Joseph Stuckey | HICKSVILLE, NY, US | \$18,575 |
| 3 | Michael Muscatello | SEAFORD, NY, US | \$13,420 |
| 4 | Samuel Elderfield | Nanaimo, BC, CA | \$9,876 |
| 5 | Jonathan Sorscher | LYNBROOK, NY, US | \$7,399 |
| 6 | James Governa | Richboro, PA, US | \$5,638 |
| 7 | Abraham Faroni | Penn Valley, PA, US | \$4,368 |
| 8 | Alex Rocha | S. Setuaket, NY, US | \$3,439 |
| 9 | Brian Ali | Brooklyn, NY, US | \$2,751 |
| 10 | Brian Reinert | Lawrenceville, GA, US | \$2,234 |
| 11 | Nick Rinaldi | Any, NY, US | \$2,234 |
| 12 | John Goveia | SYKESVILLE, MD, US | \$2,234 |
| 13 | Craig Hildreth | Highland Lakes, NJ, US | \$1,843 |
| 14 | Michael Vance | Westbury, NY, US | \$1,843 |
| 15 | Gregory Lane | MIDDLETOWN, MD, US | \$1,843 |
| 16 | Peter Simicic | E Northport, NY, US | \$1,544 |
| 17 | Robert Burstein | Richmond, VA, US | \$1,544 |
| 18 | Stephen Coleman | Fredericksburg, VA, US | \$1,544 |
| 19 | Barbara Butterfield | WALDORF, MD, US | \$1,313 |
| 20 | Michael Hunsucker | Orlando, FL, US | \$1,313 |
| 21 | Kevin Mina | DURAND, MI, US | \$1,313 |
| 22 | Stephen Snider | Grand Prairie, TX, US | \$1,132 |
| 23 | Kyle Woodruff | REEKELEY HEIGHTS, NJ, US | \$1,132 |
| 24 | Michael Perrone | Fairport, NY, US | \$1,132 |
| 25 | Bruce Frank | MONTCLAIR, NJ, US | \$991 |
| 26 | Marshall Edwards | Woodbridge, VA, US | \$991 |
| 27 | James Maltz | BRIGANTINE, NJ, US | \$991 |

Tournament Report:

Brandon Croft Takes It All – The Money, the Ring, and the Girl

Strip Club Manager Rakes in \$30,063 Worth of Dollar Bills

Brian Ali -- Last Year's Main Event Winner -- Makes Final Table

Poker Action at Caesars Atlantic City Continues through March 12th

Atlantic City, NJ (March 5, 2012) – Rod Stewart once sang, “Some guys have all the luck.” He might as well have been singing about Brandon Croft.

The 31-year-old part-time recreational poker player from Sumter, SC won the most recent World Series of Poker Circuit event, which ended late Monday night at Caesars Atlantic City.

For his first major poker tournament victory, Croft won it all. He collected a trifecta, of sorts – including the cash, the gold ring, and the girl. Win or lose, he would have had the girl anyway (his girlfriend). But Croft's thrilling victory capped what turned out to be a perfect day.

Croft is the manager of a strip club, Platinum Plus, which is located in Greenville, SC. His version of a table dance brought in the equivalent of \$30,062 in dollar bills. He was also presented with his first-ever WSOP Circuit gold ring, which is the token of achievement for winning on the WSOP tour.

Mercifully, the only flesh that was shown at the final table was Croft's bulging tattoo-laden arms, ornamented with a masterful artwork of ink that caused one spectator to whisper to another – “I'd hate to run into that guy in a dark alley.”

As things turn out, Croft turned into a brawling brute at the poker table. His unfortunate victims were the last eight opponents who made it all the way to the final table, only to essentially be belted senseless into a pile of garbage cans by a sledgehammer fist manifested in a barrage of cleverly-played hands and big pots that seemed to swing Croft's way each and every time.

By the time “last call” rolled around on Croft's act, the dimly-lit poker stage belonged to Croft alone. Indeed, he played every role in what became the perfect poker fantasy – including host, bouncer, and star.

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This was the third of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at Caesars Atlantic City. Officially listed as Event #3 -- the \$555 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament attracted 253 entries. The total prize pool came to \$122,705. The top 27 players were paid. All players who cashed received WSOP Circuit National Championship ranking points.

A full list of all players who cashed in Event #3 can be seen at WSOP.COM

The tournament was played over two consecutive days, starting on Sunday. Only 22 survivors took seats on the second day of action, played on Monday.

Following the first two hours of play on Day Two, the final table was set. The nine finalists and their starting chip counts were as follows:

SEAT 1: Michael Muscatello (Seaford, NY) – 400,000 in chips
SEAT 2: Brandon Croft (Sumter, SC) – 567,000 chips
SEAT 3: Abraham Faroni (Philadelphia, PA) – 409,000 in chips
SEAT 4: Joseph Stuckey (Hicksville, NY) – 278,000 in chips
SEAT 5: Alex Rocha (Queens, NY) – 214,000 in chips
SEAT 6: Sam Elderfield (Victoria, BC) – 604,000 in chips
SEAT 7: Brian Ali (Brooklyn, NY) – 53,000 in chips
SEAT 8: Jonathan Sorscher (Lynbrook, NY) – 149,000 in chips
SEAT 9: Jim Governa (Richboro, PA) – 175,000 in chips

The final table featured two former WSOP Circuit gold ring winners – including last year's Main Event champion from Caesars Atlantic City. However, once Brian Ali went out ninth, followed by Alex Rocha in eighth place, a first-time champion was guaranteed.

The two early chip leaders were Sam Elderfield and Brandon Croft, who were neck to neck in first place. However, the wide disparity of chips made the finale a wide-open contest.

The final playing session began at 5 pm local time. Play finished at midnight making the total duration about seven hours, minus a one-hour dinner break. The official order of finish was as follows:

9th Place – Brian Ali hit the rail quickly. He began play with the shortest stack and was unable to overcome the disadvantage. Ali, a 52-year-old former employee of Verizon and former U.S. Marine cashed for the second time in three events at this WSOP Circuit stop. He took 28th place in Event #1. Ali, last year's Main Event winner, has three final table appearances over the past two seasons.

8th Place – Alex Rocha went out next, finishing in eighth place. He is a 22-year-old poker player from Queens, NY. Rocha won a gold ring last season at Harrah's Atlantic City. This marked his fifth time to cash on the WSOP Circuit, all within the past two years.

7th Place – Abraham Faroni was the seventh-place finisher. He is a 21-year-old student at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. This was Faroni's second time to cash at this WSOP Circuit stop. He took 50th place in the opener.

6th Place – Jim Governa ended up in sixth place. He is a police officer from Richboro, PA. Governa has an impressive tournament record, given that he only plays part time. He's won two major events at the Borgata Atlantic City. Governa has also previously come in second and fourth in two WSOP Circuit events.

5th Place – Jonathan Sorscher busted out in the middle of the final table pack, taking fifth place. He is a 32-year-old poker player from Lynbrook, NY. This was Sorscher's fifth time to cash on the WSOP Circuit. Three years ago, he was the runner up in an event at the IP in Biloxi (Mississippi).

4th Place – Sam Elderfield finished fourth. He is a 26-year-old professional poker player from Victoria, BC (Canada). Elderfield noted that he's been inspired by his mother as a player. Sadly, she passed away late last year. Elderfield stated that his mother was always supportive of his decision to play full time. She would certainly be proud of her son's performance in this tournament. This marked the Canadian's first time to cash in a WSOP-related event.

3rd Place – Michael Muscatello came in third place. He is a 58-year-old former New York City police detective who is now retired. Muscatello has quite a claim to fame in his former profession. He worked in the narcotics division for several years, assigned to the same department as the famed Frank Serpico. Muscatello enjoyed his best WSOP-related finish in this tournament after making five previous final tables in other events.

2nd Place – Joseph Stuckey finished as the runner up. He is 29-years-old and resides in Hicksville, NY. Second place paid a consolation prize amounting to \$18,575.

When heads-up play began, Croft enjoyed a 4 to 1 chip advantage over Stuckey. But the underdog battled back bravely and made Croft earn every chip from that point forward. It took nearly two hours for Croft to close out what gradually became an elusive victory, and that took place with the help of winning a race on the final hand. The last hand of the tournament proceeded as follows:

Croft: Ac Th
Stuckey: 7h 7s
Flop: Ad Ts 5s
Turn: Jh
River: Qc

Stuckey was all-in with a pocket pair and enjoyed a slight advantage. But two pair on the flop reversed the edge in Croft's favor. Down to two outs, Stuckey missed on the last two rounds and Croft was declared the victor with two pair – aces over tens.

1st Place – Brandon Croft became the third WSOP Circuit champion crowned this year at Caesars Atlantic City. He won his biggest payout ever – totaling \$30,062 for the victory. The recreational poker player was also presented with his first gold ring.

With his victory, Croft moves into the top spot along with the previous two winners (Events #1 and #2) as the early leaders in this WSOP Circuit's "Best All-Around Player" standings. The player who accumulates the most overall points in Caesar's Atlantic City's twelve combined gold ring tournaments receives a pre-paid entry into the \$1 million 2011-2012 WSOP Circuit National Championship. At least two players from this tournament series will qualify for the WSOP Circuit National Championship, which is classified as a WSOP gold bracelet event. The other automatic qualifier will be the winner of Main Event championship (to be held March 10-12).

Here is the list of gold ring winners from Caesars Atlantic City, so far:

EVENT #1: Michael McGuinness defeated 667 players (\$345 NLHE) and won \$39,790

EVENT #2: Sarah Dygert defeated 887 players (\$345 NLHE) and won \$50,333

EVENT #3: Brandon Croft defeated 253 players (\$555 NLHE) and won \$30,062

With the third tournament now wrapped up, there are still nine more gold ring events remaining in what is being billed as a "12 rings in 12 days" poker series. The WSOP Circuit at Caesars Atlantic City continues through March 12th. This year's schedule includes not only all the gold ring events, but multiple second-chance tournaments, single table and mega satellites, plus cash games going around the clock inside the action-packed poker room

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MORE ABOUT THE WSOP CIRCUIT AT CAESARS ATLANTIC CITY

The World Series of Poker Circuit is taking place at Caesars Atlantic City, one of the East Coast's premier gaming and entertainment destinations.

Indeed, this marks the seventh consecutive season that Caesars Atlantic City has hosted a WSOP Circuit stop. The luxurious casino resort has been a flagship of poker action since the first WSOP tournament took place, back in 2006.

This year's "12 Rings in 12 Days" series is taking place March 1-12. As has been the case for all previous major poker events, all action is held inside an expansive grand ballroom located on the second floor, adjacent to the main casino. In past years, the entire ballroom has been packed to capacity with players, as many of Caesars Atlantic City's events have sold out. Attendance for Atlantic City's WSOP tournaments has consistently remained high, despite the spread of poker and tournaments to other venues in nearby states and plenty of healthy competition throughout the Northeast.

This will be the 12th of 17 stops of the 2011-2012 World Series of Poker Circuit season. Just three months ago, Harrah's Atlantic City hosted the first of two New Jersey appearances by the WSOP Circuit and its players. Attendance surpassed what many observers were projecting, which leads one to believe a repeat of a successful tournament series is inevitable.

Aside from great poker tournament action and live games, there's plenty to do on the Jersey Shore during March. The casino-resort is located adjacent to the world most famous Boardwalk on the Atlantic Ocean. While the WSOP is in town, Atlantic City is hosting its famous "Restaurant Week," which is a seven-day celebration of great cuisine. Atlantic City Restaurant Week takes place March 3-10. Many restaurants within a short distance of Caesars Atlantic City are participating in the food and wine festival.

There's a lot at stake for poker players who will make their way to the Jersey Shore. Not only are a dozen gold rings up for grabs, lots of prize money will also be awarded to those who cash. All players who finish in the money will also earn ranking points, which are used to determine finalists for the season-ending WSOP Circuit National Championship.

Since the season began in September, all tournament players have been in the running for 100 guaranteed pre-paid seats in the \$1 million WSOP Circuit National Championship finale – which will be a WSOP gold bracelet event to be played in Las Vegas, around the time of the World Series of Poker.

To see the complete Caesars Atlantic City tournament schedule, please visit WSOP.com.

Stay tuned to WSOP.com for the latest reports and updates from Caesars Atlantic City. WSOP.com will carry a LIVE VIDEO STREAM of every final table, starting most afternoons.

Note: Be sure and follow all WSOP news and updates on Twitter @wsop

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