

2013/2014 World Series of Poker Circuit

Season 10

Harrah's Rincon

Valley Center, CA

Event #1

No Limit Hold'em

Buy-In: \$365

Total Entries: 221

Prize Pool: \$66,300

December 5-6, 2013



Drew Merrick Gets First Tournament Win At Harrah's Rincon

Gutter Guy Beats Gill, Gets Gold

Valley Center, CA (December 6, 2013) — "Poker is just a hobby" for Drew Merrick, who owns Aquatech Rain Gutters. Today he turned his hobby into \$16,576 with his first-ever tournament win in Event 1, \$365 No Limit Hold'em. He also picked up a shiny gold WSOP Circuit ring for his efforts.

Paramjit Gill finished second, earning \$10,245. This is Gill's *third* second-place finish in a WSOP Circuit event. His two other near misses were in Tahoe in 2005 and here at Rincon playing HORSE in 2009. In addition, he finished 78th in the 2006 WSOP Main Event, earning \$65,973. He was by far the most accomplished player at this final table.

Third place and \$7,456 went to Neal Houska, who is a video editor for Fox Sports in Los Angeles. He was in the middle of the pack with a below average stack at the start of the final table, but played solid and moved up during the day. Houska was eventually taken out by Drew Merrick, whose pocket Queens held up against Houska's AT.

Merrick commented that playing with Gill was "fun...he was a good sport". Gill started heads-up with a 2:1 chip lead, but Merrick got the big hands when it counted. Pocket Queens got Merrick his first big double up, bringing them close to even. Then pocket Kings got him the double up that left Gill with a single 5,000 chip -- the amount of the ante. Three hands later it was over.

The first of twelve gold ring events, a \$365 No Limit Hold'em tournament, drew 221 entries generating a prize pool of \$66,300. The final 24 players earned a payday. [Full results are available on WSOP.com.](http://www.wsop.com)

Day 1 began Thursday at 12 pm PDT and consumed 21 levels (until about 2:20 am). Day 2 started Friday at 2 pm with the official nine-handed final table. The last hand played out at about 7:30 pm, five and a half hours after the final table began.

Drew Merrick taught himself to play the game by reading lots of books. Dan Harrington's Hold'em books are some of his favorites. He also likes Daniel Negreanu's 'small ball' approach, "but you have to have chips to play that style" he says. The 35-year-old is self-employed and is married with two small children. That doesn't leave a lot of time for poker, but he plays cash games and tournaments when he can.

His tournament "started slow" yesterday. Then there was a key hand where three players were all-in. Merrick had pocket Kings and was up against pocket Queens and pocket Tens. His cowboys held up and it "took off from there", he said. He finished the day with a below average stack of 129,000, which was just over ten big blinds when the final table began with blinds of 6k/12k with 2k ante.

Merrick caught an early double up at the final table with pocket 9s against pocket 8s. Then he caught a key double up through the chip leader John Alexander Jr. Alexander shoved on a flop with a pair, flush draw, and gutshot when Merrick held top pair (Aces). He "dodged a lot of outs" and his hand help to give Merrick the chip lead. Alexander later busted out in 6th place for \$3,159.

Nicole Weimer was the last woman in this event. She started the final table fourth in chips and ended up in fifth place, earning \$4,142.

Final Table Results

1. Drew Merrick (San Diego, CA) \$16,576
2. Paramjit Gill (Diamond Bar, CA) \$10,245
3. Neal Houska (Montclair, CA) \$7,456
4. Andy Wagner (San Diego, CA) \$5,514
5. Nicole Weimer (St. Petersburg, FL) \$4,142
6. John Alexander Jr (San Diego, CA) \$3,159
7. TJ Western (San Diego, CA) \$2,446
8. Leonard Finkel (Vista, CA) \$1,923
9. Brad Maxwell (San Jacinto, CA) \$1,534

In addition to the win, Drew Merrick earned 50 points toward the Casino Champion race and National Leaderboard. He's now the Harrah's Rincon points leader, but doesn't know if he'll be able to play any more events during this series. He has to get back to his business and his family, but might try to sneak away to play another event before the series is over.

The player who accumulates the most overall points during Harrah's Rincon's twelve gold ring tournaments will earn the title Casino Champion and receive automatic entry into the WSOP National Championship to take place at Caesars Atlantic City in Spring of 2014.

All players who cash in ring events receive points that apply toward the Casino Champion's race and the season-long race to claim one of 50 at-large National Championship bids awarded to the top point earners throughout the season. More information on the points system is available on WSOP.com.

Here is the list of gold ring winners from Harrah's Rincon:

EVENT #1: Drew Merrick defeated 221 players (\$365 NLH) for \$16,576

With the first tournament in the books, eleven more ring events remain at Harrah's Rincon.

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