

**2013/2014 World Series of Poker Circuit
Season 10
Choctaw Resort and Casino
Durant, OK
Event #5
No-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In: \$300 (+\$65)
Total Entries: 288
Prize Pool: \$86,400
January 12-13, 2014**



Ryan Van Sanford Bests Star-Studded Finale at Choctaw

Three-time ring winner La Sengphet exits 10th, gold bracelet winner Ylon Schwartz fourth and two-time ring winner John Land third.

20-year-old Van Sanford earns first gold ring and \$20,732.

Durant, OK (January 14, 2014) — At just 20 years old Ryan Van Sanford lays claim to the Circuit's most coveted prize – a gold ring.

The Colorado Springs, CO resident bested 288 at Choctaw Casino Resort early Tuesday in Event 5, a \$365 No-Limit Hold'em event, donning gold and pocketing \$20,732 in the process. In addition to his first Circuit win, the finish marks his first live cash and the Choctaw series marks the first live trip for the young pro.

"I was nervous I was going to brick the whole trip," he said. "To come out with a ring is incredible."

If earning gold before you're even old enough to have a cocktail to celebrate wasn't impressive enough, Van Sanford, who's a full two years clear of the 18-year minimum to play in Oklahoma, put an exclamation point on his victory by besting one of the most decorated tournaments of the season.

Three-time ring winner La Sengphet lead the second and final day of play but stumbled nearing the final table exiting 10th. While her exit was good news for the final table, Van Sanford was far from in the clear.

Still remaining were gold bracelet winner Ylon Schwartz, two-time ring winner "Cowboy" John Land and Horseshoe Hammond six-handed winner Ben Keeline. Van Sanford had Keeline's number, doubling through him three times before Keeline exited eighth.

Next of the notables to hit the rail was Schwartz in fourth, then Land in third. Finally, only James Canada and his convincing chip lead stood between Van Sanford and a \$20,000 payday.

Canada, who was rarely without a beverage during the late stages of play, surrendered a handful of double ups to Van Sanford and suddenly it was anybody's game. Van Sanford was all

business, unable to partake in the libations that consumed his heads-up opponent and much of his rail, and it wasn't long before the clear-minded 20 something closed the book on his first ring.

"It was slightly confusing," Van Sanford said of playing Canada heads-up. "I started out a lot shorter than him. He had me out chipped so I knew it was going to be a long uphill battle. I knew I could do it. I'm glad I won."

It would appear the only people more excited than Van Sanford were those on his rail – friends, coaches and well wishers – who greeted the young pro with genuine happiness following the win.

"What I'm going to remember more than anything is the rail. Having all my friends here. They hung around for hours just to see me win. I'm going to remember that forever," Van Sanford said.

Van Sanford hopes for the same success Choctaw's last 20-year-old winner – Sam Panzica – has experienced. Following his Event 12 victory at last year's series, Panzica earned Casino Championship honors at Palm Beach Kennel Club, turned 21 in time for the National Championship and parlayed his berth into a 16th-place finish in the season-ending event.

"This is the start of big things I hope," Van Sanford said.

Event 5 was the fifth of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at Choctaw Casino Resort. The \$365 No-Limit Hold'em tournament attracted 288 players generating an \$86,400 prize pool. The top 30 players were paid.

Day 1 began Sunday at 5 p.m. and lasted 15 levels. Day 2 began Monday at 2 p.m. with 33 players remaining. The nine-handed final table started at about 8 p.m. and concluded just after 1 a.m.

Notes on the Event

- The Choctaw Resort Circuit series marks the 12th of 22 events scheduled for the 2013/2014 season.

The player who accumulates the most overall points during Choctaw Casino Resort's twelve combined gold ring tournaments earns the title Casino Champion and receives automatic entry into the WSOP National Championship to take place at Caesars Atlantic City this spring.

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 Choctaw Casino Resort:

EVENT #1: Sean Stevens defeated 533 players (\$365 NLH) for \$34,380

EVENT #2: Chris Benoy defeated 254 players (\$365 PLO) for \$18,667

EVENT #3: Chris Bowen defeated 2,867 entries (\$365 NLH Re-Entry) for \$122,567

EVENT #4: Jacob McFarland defeated 483 players (\$365 One-Day NLH) for \$31,159

EVENT #5: Ryan Van Sanford defeated 388 players (\$365 NLH) for \$20,732

With the fifth tournament wrapped, seven more ring events remain at Choctaw Casino Resort.

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