

**2013/2014 World Series of Poker Circuit  
Harrah's Cherokee  
Event #1  
No-Limit Hold'em  
Buy-In: \$300 (+\$65)  
Total Entries: 700  
Total Prize Pool: \$210,000  
April 3-4, 2014**

## **Mark Saporito Takes Down First Gold Ring in Cherokee**

**Habitat for Humanity homebuilder turns first live tournament cash into victory for over \$43K and a Circuit ring**

**Cherokee, North Carolina (April 4, 2014)** – After just over ten hours of play and outlasting a returning field of 22 runners, Mark Saporito has been crowned the first champion of the 2013/14 World Series of Poker Circuit at Harrah's Cherokee. Saporito defeated Michael "Konchi" Kassem heads up to earn \$43,048 and his first Circuit ring.

"This feels wonderful," said an exasperated Saporito after his win. "It's definitely been a good run. A dream."

Saporito's dream has transcended that status and become a reality. Just 36 hours ago, Saporito was one of the 700 entries into the inaugural event at Harrah's Cherokee. Saporito fought through 21 levels of play on the first day and found himself among the 22 players to return for Day 2.

Once those final 22 were whittled down to the final table, it seemed that Saporito himself was invincible. Each of the eight eliminations at the final table came at Saporito's hands, allowing him to claim true domination over the field.

"I knocked out every single player at the final table," Saporito excitedly proclaimed after his victory. "I made one big bluff at the end of the final table and that was sort of the tournament right there. Other than that I had aces when another dude had kings. That was a big hand right there. In another hand I had jacks, raised before the flop and got called by ace-nine. The flop came 9-3-2 and I shipped it in. He snap-called and that gave me like half of the chips in play."

From there, Saporito found himself with a significant chip advantage against his heads up opponent Kassem. After a little over an hour of heads up play, Saporito sealed the deal by flopping a straight against Kassem's top pair. The straight held up through the subsequent streets and he was awarded the title.

This impressive run not only marks Saporito's first victory, but also his first major live tournament cash. When he's not playing poker in his spare time, Saporito devotes himself toward charitable causes. In fact, immediately after his victory, Saporito left to head back to work.

"I'm going back to Knoxville," said Saporito. "I work for Knoxville Habitat For Humanity. I'm a homebuilder with them. I have to be there at the site at 5:30 am. I'm working all day for the next seven days."

Despite an early start following his win, Saporito noted that he was thankful his boss gave him the time off to play as he is now over \$43,000 richer and a champion of the WSOP Circuit.

Final table results were as follows:

1st – Mark Saporito - \$43,048  
2nd – Michael Kassem - \$26,639  
3rd – Michael Horchoff - \$19,538  
4th – Richard Arnold - \$14,530  
5th – Gary Thrill - \$10,952  
6th – Dave Dickinson - \$8,364  
7th – Juan Mendoza - \$6,472  
8th – Chris Simpson - \$5,074  
9th – Terrell Deen - \$4,028

## Notes on the Event

- This event kicked off the 2013/14 Circuit series at the Harrah's Cherokee.
- This was Saporito's first live tournament cash, first final table, and ultimately his first victory.
- Saporito eliminated every player at the final table on his way to victory.

The player who accumulates the most overall points during the Harrah's Cherokee gold ring tournaments will earn the title Casino Champion and receive automatic entry into the WSOP National Championship to take place on May 22-24 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 The Bicycle Casino:

EVENT #1: Mark Saporito defeated 700 players (\$365 NLH) for \$43,048.

With the first event completed, there are still eleven more ring events to go including the currently running \$1,675 Main Event.

For more information about the World Series of Poker Circuit, be sure to follow us on Twitter @WSOP or check out WSOP.com.

For additional information please contact:

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