

**2014/2015 World Series of Poker Circuit
Season 11
Foxwoods Casino
Mashantucket, CT
Event #2
No-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In: \$300 (+\$65)
Total Entries: 124
Prize Pool: \$37,287
May 14, 2015**



Mike O'Connell Hits Quads To Win His First WSOP Circuit Ring

Mashantucket, CT (May 14, 2015) — The second event at the World Series of Poker Circuit at Foxwoods Casino had a surprisingly modest 124 entries, and only 14 hours after the event began, ship broker Mike O'Connell walked away the winner, taking home \$10,441 and his first WSOP-C ring.

While the field was on the smaller side, Mike's competition was not. The final table included WSOP-C ring holder Andy Spears, who locked up his seat at the National Championship with his final table appearance. Andy took 5th place in this event when his A♣ Q♣ ran into his opponent's K♠ K♣.

Another player locked up his seat at the National Championship at this final table. John Matson had won a WSOP-C ring in February at Palm Beach Kennel Club in Florida, and his 4th place finish today earned him enough points to qualify. John eventually busted holding Q♦ Q♣ against Bart Fooden's A♦ K♠.

Bart subsequently earned his biggest cash on the WSOP Circuit with his 3rd place finish, earning \$4,657. On his bio sheet, Bart mentioned that he just had his first grandchild and dedicated this tournament to her.

Hassan Babajane was the last opponent that stood in the way of Mike's victory. In 2011, Hassan took 2nd in the World Series of Poker Event #36 for \$463,480, coming so close to earning his first WSOP bracelet. Mike had a 2-to-1 chip lead over Hassan entering heads up play, and Hassan quickly got his chips in with a coin flip: A♣ Q♥ against Mike's 5♦ 5♣. The 9c 5♥ 6♣ made Mike a huge favorite, but Hassan could backdoor a flush. Hassan was looking for a club to hit the turn to give him some hope, but instead the 5♠ fell on the turn to give Mike unbeatable quads. The meaningless 3s river meant Hassan would have to settle for \$6,454 for 2nd place.

Mike took home \$10,441 and his first WSOP Circuit ring for his 1st place finish, which is his first live poker tournament win. When taking his winner photo, Mike kept repeating the phrase, "This is so cool." His enjoyment of his win definitely shows in his winner photo.

Mike is a self-admitted recreational poker player, and when asked why he didn't fully fill out his bio sheet, Mike explained that he didn't expect to be at the final table for long enough for

anything to be written about him. Mike explained that he and his friend Brian Pincus planned to play this tournament months ago, as they try to every year. "I came here for one thing: to drink beer. I did not come here to win," Mike told us. Brian did well in his own right, taking 9th in this tournament for \$941. The two are long-time friends through hockey, and Mike coaches hockey himself as well as being a ship broker for a living.

After being explained the points process for the National Championship, Mike responded, "I'm not even worried." He's planning to skip Event \$3 \$1,125 NLH to enjoy his win, but plans to play Event #5 \$580 NLH. When Mike discovered there were two flights for this event, he decided to play the 5pm flight so he and Brian could watch the Lightning vs. Rangers playoff game.

Event #2 was the second of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at Foxwoods Casino. The \$365 no-limit hold'em event attracted 124 players creating a \$37,287 prize pool. The top 15 players were paid.

The tournament began Thursday, May 14 at 11am, and the unofficial final table was reached just before 10pm. Play continued and just after 1am, the final table had concluded.

The player who accumulates the most overall points during Foxwoods Casinos's 12 combined gold ring tournaments earns the title Casino Champion and receives automatic entry into the WSOP National Championship. Additionally, all players who cash in ring events earn points that apply toward the season-long race to claim one of 60 expected 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.

For more information about the WSOP Circuit, be sure to follow us on Twitter at [@WSOP](https://twitter.com/WSOP) or check out WSOP.com.

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