

## **2015/2016 World Series of Poker Circuit**

**Season 12**

**Palm Beach Kennel Club**

**West Palm Beach, Fla.**

**Event #7**

**No-Limit Hold'em Six-Handed**

**Buy-In: \$300 (+\$65)**

**Total Entries: 115**

**Prize Pool: \$34,500**

**September 22-23, 2015**



## **Robert Hodson Dedicates Victory to Late Friend Chad Batista**

**Florida pro honors the memory of one of the game's best gone too soon, wins first Circuit ring and \$10,351 in six-max event.**

**West Palm Beach, Fla. (September 23, 2015)** — Robert “Bobby” Hodson honored the memory of his late friend Chad “lilholdem954” Batista the best way he knew how Wednesday at the Palm Beach Kennel Club. Hodson, a Florida pro, won Event #7 at the WSOP Circuit, dedicating the victory to Batista and joining him in the fraternity of ring holders. Batista passed away unexpectedly last month sending a ripple through the poker community that’s still very much at the forefront of many players’ minds.

Hodson met Batista, who’s commonly recognized as one of the first online superstars, in 2008 following some success on the virtual felt. They exchanged messages back and forth and Batista encouraged Hodson to make a visit to his house. Without even knowing each other, the pair clicked right away. At first it was primarily strategy talk, but over time it formed into a close friendship.

“He was a down to earth, really good guy,” an emotional Hodson remembered. “He was just so far advanced online [...] He showed me multiple different ways to win; how to close, how to be aggressive, how to tighten up when I have to. I started having some big wins after that. A lot of my early online success, I give a lot of props to Chad. [Online poker] was his thing and he was the best for a long time.”

Hodson shared memories of his friend that included a week-long trip to Las Vegas in which Batista rented a Bentley. Hodson described him as extravagant, flashy, funny and a great guy. He mentioned how much Batista loved his dogs, Bluff and Gamble, and even offered to take them in after Batista’s passing.

Over the past few weeks, Hodson has used poker as a way to remember his friend. He entered Event #7 at PBKC with a heavy heart having been unable to finish it off in Event #1 just a few days ago, busting fourth. Hodson exchanged messages with Batista’s aunt and told her the second go around would be different. He took his seat on Day 2 Wednesday leading the final seven players and felt a newfound calm and confidence that helped propel him to victory.

“I honestly felt Chad was watching over my shoulder this tournament. I just had this presence there,” Hodson said. “In my head, Chad would say ‘Click it back there, man. Just click it back.’ I wouldn’t want to click it back, but in my head he said click it back and I clicked it back. What do you know, the guy mucked. [I wanted to] use my stack — as Chad would always do — against bigger stacks as some leverage because they don’t want to bust either and they don’t want to tango with me either.”

Even in his absence, Batista’s wisdom and confidence in Hodson shone through brighter than anything else Wednesday at the PBKC. Hodson channeled the years of strategy talk, camaraderie and so much more, and used it to join Batista in the Circuit winner’s circle.

“I really feel like [Chad’s] happy right now. I know he’s in peace and in a much better place and that makes me happy,” Hodson said in closing.

Hodson is 32 years old and resides in nearby Jupiter, Fla. His Event #7 victory marks his fifth Circuit cash and first gold ring win.

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Event #7 was the seventh of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at the Palm Beach Kennel Club. The \$365 no-limit hold’em six-handed event attracted 115 players. The total prize pool came to \$34,500 and the top 12 finishers were paid.

The tournament began Tuesday, September 22 at noon and Day 1 wrapped midway through Level 18 at the unofficial final table (at about 12 a.m.). Day 2 resumed Wednesday at 1 p.m. and action concluded toward the middle of Level 22 (at about 4:30 p.m.).

Final results:

- 1st: Robert “Bobby” Hodson - \$10,351 + Circuit gold ring
- 2nd: Ron Esmann - \$6,397
- 3rd: John Barrientes - \$4,594
- 4th: Bryce McVay - \$3,316
- 5th: Michelle Shah - \$2,396
- 6th: Brett Bader - \$1,736
- 7th: Donovan Bragg - \$1,262
- 8th: John Vale - \$1,262
- 9th: Christopher Staats - \$920
- 10th: Eric Brewster - \$920
- 11th: Earl Gallegos - \$673
- 12th: Diosdad Icaawat - \$673

Here is the list of gold ring winners from the Palm Beach Kennel Club:

- EVENT #1: Joshua Beckley defeated 317 players (\$365 Monster Stack) for \$22,349
- EVENT #2: Matthew Ezrol defeated 57 players (\$365 HORSE) for \$6,412
- EVENT #3: Jonathan Abila defeated 615 entries (\$580 NLH Re-Entry) for \$64,575
- EVENT #4: John Vale defeated 98 players (\$365 NLH) for \$8,821
- EVENT #5: Cody Pack defeated 107 players (\$365 NLH) for \$9,630
- EVENT #6: Mark Smith defeated 91 players (\$365 PLO Hi-Low) for \$8,192

EVENT #7: Robert “Bobby” Hodson defeated 115 players (\$365 NLH Six-Handed) for \$10,351

The player who accumulates the most overall points during the Palm Beach Kennel Club’s 12 combined gold ring tournaments earns the title Casino Champion and receives automatic entry into the WSOP Global Casino Championship. Additionally, all players who cash in ring events earn points that apply toward the season-long race to claim one of 50 expected at-large WSOP Global Casino Championship bids awarded to the top point earners. More information on the season-ending event is available on [WSOP.com](http://WSOP.com).

All rings at the Palm Beach Kennel Club are furnished by [Jostens](http://Jostens), the official ring supplier of the 2015/2016 WSOP Circuit season.

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](http://WSOP.com).

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