

2015/2016 World Series of Poker Circuit

Season 12

Harrah's Atlantic City

Atlantic City, NJ

Event #2

No-Limit Hold'em

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

Total Entries: 180

Prize Pool: \$54,000

March 16-17, 2016



John Yanni Wins First Gold Ring and \$14,582

Early retiree takes down Event #2 at Harrah's Atlantic City

Atlantic City, NJ (March 17, 2016) — John Yanni is the champion of Event #2 at Harrah's Atlantic City, defeating a field of 180 players to claim his first gold ring. In addition to the jewelry, Yanni collected \$14,582 in cash and 50 points in the race for Casino Champion at this venue.

The champ is a 34-year-old poker pro originally from Buffalo, New York. He's been playing the game recreationally while juggling a full-time day job since graduating from high school. "I was a glorified gas station attendant," he said. "I fueled planes for a living." After notching a five-figure score in 2014, though, Yanni opted for an early retirement to pursue the game full time. "I felt like that was it. I always wanted to pursue this dream, and I went for it."

So far, so good for the new pro.

Yanni entered the Event #2 final table as the chip leader with just shy of 40 big blinds and Steven Rodriguez nipping at his heels. Five hours later, the two were heads up for the title, with Rodriguez beginning the battle holding a 2:1 chip lead. That lead event swelled to more than 5:1 before Yanni went on a massive rush. Over the course of just a couple orbits, he took over the lead, accumulating his own 5:1 advantage.

On the final hand, Rodriguez moved all in with pocket deuces on the button, and Yanni called with king-five. The sweat lasted all the way to the river before the King of Spades filled out the board to sent the pot and the title to Yanni.

"This means the world to me," he said, fighting to keep control of his emotions after his first live tournament victory. "It means I can keep doing my thing, you know?"

When asked about his plans for the rest of the Circuit season, Yanni had no answer. "I don't know what I'm doing next," he laughed. "I really have no idea. I have to take this all in first."

Event #2 was the second of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at Harrah's Atlantic City. The \$365 event drew a field of 180 players, generating a prizepool worth \$54,000. The final 18 players finished in the money.

The tournament began at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16, and play was suspended with nine players remaining near the end of Level 21. Day 2 began at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 17, and the last hand was dealt at about 6:00 p.m.

The player who accumulates the most overall points during Harrah's Atlantic City's 12 ring events earns the title of 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 the limited at-large bids. More information on the points system is available on WSOP.com.

All rings at Harrah's Atlantic City are furnished by Jostens, the official ring supplier of the 2015-2016 WSOP Circuit season.

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