

**2016/2017 World Series of Poker Circuit at Choctaw Durant
Event #5
No-Limit Hold'em One Day
Buy-In: \$365
Total Entries: 399
Total Prize Pool: \$119,700
January 15, 2017**

Nathanael Kogel Wins First Ring in Choctaw Event #5

Durant, Oklahoma (January 17, 2017) – After an incredibly strong final table showing, Nathanael Kogel bested a field of 399 entries to win his first World Series of Poker Circuit ring and the top prize of \$26,334.

Kogel has been playing professional tournament poker for the last eight years, and has waited for this day the entirety of his career.

“Unreal, it’s not really even clicking yet. Like, I’ve been waiting for this moment for probably eight years, and it finally just feels amazing to grasp that title,” Kogel explained.

Ironically, Kogel almost didn’t play this event. The tournament had started at 5pm and around 6:15 he was sitting with a friend watching the Dallas Cowboys game when he said, “You know what man, I have to go win a ring.” According to Kogel his original plan was to relax and watch the game on Sunday and then play the six max event on Monday at noon, but something told him he needed to go play right then. So he packed up and headed down to the tournament room, registering about four levels into play.

“I doubled up my first hand with aces vs .Js10s on a KxQs4s board. Three hands later I doubled up again with ace-king, and from then I just never stopped,” Kogel said nostalgically.

While Kogel mostly focuses on tournament play, in the last eight months he had tried to start playing more cash. He believes that it’s important to balance tournament play with cash games in order to reduce variance, and thanks his girlfriend Shino Fujiwara for helping to develop his cash game further. Kogel and Fujiwara have been dating for nine months and he gives special thanks to their relationship for making him not only a better poker player, but a better person overall.

“It’s good to have somebody you can talk with, and just talk about hands and really just learn the game together. We can share information,” Kogel explained. According to Kogel, he has taught her to be more aggressive and “lethal,” and she has helped him with discipline. “She’s my rock. I really love that girl very much,” he said.

Kogel and Fujiwara obviously make a true power couple. As Kogel won his ring late Monday night/early Tuesday morning, Fujiwara, a poker player and a student of kinesiology, was one of the final ten players to bag up in the six max event.

In addition to his girlfriend, Kogel also credits his friend and poker coach Ben Reason for providing unwavering support.

"I am just thankful that I have this opportunity every single day to play a game that I love and I praise the Lord. I am just really really thankful. I really don't think a lot of people understand how hard this game is, and to get that understanding from people is very settling. For instance, sometimes parents don't think that poker is the way, or they don't see it how you see it. They don't see you grinding and working 24/7 and putting in the hours every single day. They don't get to see the part that you are working, they only get to see when you are winning or losing, the end results. But when you win, and they actually see the accomplishment, that's what makes my heart feel amazing. It's just heartwarming. Unreal, really," Kogel concluded with a smile.

Below are the results of the final table. Full results from this event are available on WSOP.com.

- 1 – Nathanael Kogel – \$26,334
- 2 – Martin Saucedo – \$16,273
- 3 – Michael Nosek – \$11,891
- 4 – Hoan Nguyen – \$8,829
- 5 – Neil Volaski – \$6,658
- 6 – Boris Kasabov – \$5,096
- 7 – Elizabeth Nugent – \$3,957
- 8 – Steven Velzis – \$3,117
- 9 – Robert Rector – \$2,490

At the conclusion of this event Jorge Nieto, Wesley Cooper, Andrew Telfer, Charles Adkins, and Nathanael Kogel are now tied with 50 points each in the Casino Champion race. The player who accumulates the most overall points in the twelve gold ring tournaments at Choctaw Casino earns the title of Casino Champion, and receives an automatic entry into the \$1 million 2017 WSOP Global Casino Championship (seat valued at \$10,000). The winner of the Choctaw Main Event earns an automatic entry to the Global Casino Championship as well. All players who cash in ring events will receive points that apply to both the Casino Champion race and the season-long race to claim one of the 50 at-large Global Casino 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 so far:

EVENT #1: Jorge Nieto defeated 1,096 entries (\$365 No-Limit Hold'em Monster Stack) for \$60,005.

EVENT #2: Charles Adkins defeated 5,280 entries (\$365 No-Limit Hold'em Re-Entry) for \$237,622

EVENT #3: Wesley Cooper defeated 377 entries (\$365 Congress 5-Card Omaha High Low) for \$24,882.

EVENT #4: Andrew Telfer defeated 506 entries (\$365 No-Limit Hold'em One Day) for \$32,636

EVENT #5: Nathanael Kogel defeated 399 entries (\$365 No-Limit Hold'em) for \$26,334

With this tournament now wrapped up, there are still 7 more gold ring events before the WSOP Circuit at Choctaw concludes on January 23, 2017.

All rings at Choctaw Casino are furnished by [Jostens](#), the official ring supplier of the 2016-2017 WSOP Circuit season.

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