

2016/2017 World Series of Poker Circuit

Season 13

Horseshoe Baltimore

Baltimore, Md.

Event #5

No-Limit Hold'em

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

Total Entries: 165

Prize Pool: \$49,500

May 2-3, 2017



Roland Israelashvili Wins Fifth Ring

Georgian-American pro takes down \$365 event for \$13k and the jewelry

BALTIMORE, Md. (May 4, 2017) — In the 13-year history of the WSOP Circuit, less than 20 players have won at least five times on the traveling tour. Roland Israelashvili added his name to the short list on Wednesday.

Israelashvili took down the \$365 no-limit hold'em event at Horseshoe Baltimore, outlasting a field of 165 entries to win his fifth gold ring. The victory was his eighth in-the-money finish this season, and this one earned him \$13,364 in cash.

The newest member of the five-time club is a 59-year-old Georgian-American pro who's spent the majority of his life in and around Queens, New York. His previous careers included open-wheel racing — he earned the nickname "Speedy" for that reason — and small business ownership, but he's been playing poker professionally since 2005.

In that time, Israelashvili has amassed close to \$3 million in live tournament earnings, including these five rings. He's also made three WSOP final tables, including a third-place finish in the 2012 Poker Players Championship, demonstrating his ability to play the eight-game mix at a world-class level. There's also that 37th-place finish in the 2005 WSOP Main Event on his record.

As far as poker tournaments go, this one went rather swimmingly for Israelashvili. After a productive day to that point, he entered the final table second in chips behind Kurt Jewell, a Kentucky pro who already has five Circuit victories on his record. "Kurt was tough," Israelashvili said in his postgame interviews. "He had a big rush."

With eight players left, though, Israelashvili took the chip in a double knockout pot in which his pocket tens won a flip against two sets of overcards. He was out-flopped by the player holding king-queen, but Israelashvili turned a set of tens to score the double knockout and catapult into the chip lead with six players remaining.

From there on out, it was relatively smooth sailing for the champ. “When you’re destined to win a tournament, you can’t screw it up,” he said. “Sometimes, that’s how it feels.”

The dangerous Jewell dropped out in third place, and Israelashvili entered the heads-up match against Mayb Sersland with a significant chip disadvantage. He doubled into the lead about a half hour into the match, though, and a few hands later, it was all over, with Israelashvili posing for photos with ring number five.

A WSOP bracelet is one of the few accolades missing from Israelashvili’s career stat sheet, a distinction he’s intent on changing this summer in Las Vegas. “This is the year,” he said firmly. “Yes. This is the year.”

With the summer’s festivities less than a month away, Israelashvili seems to have gotten hot at the right time, and he’ll be one worth keeping an eye on once the Series begins.

Event #5 was the fifth of 12 gold ring events on the WSOP Circuit schedule at Horseshoe Baltimore. The \$365 no-limit hold’em event drew a field of 165 entries, generating a prize pool worth \$49,500. The final 18 players finished in the money.

The tournament began at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2, and action was suspended with 10 players remaining at the end of Level 21. Day 2 was held Wednesday, May 3 beginning at 3 p.m., and the last hand was dealt just before 8 p.m..

The player who accumulates the most overall points during Horseshoe Baltimore’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 Horseshoe Baltimore are furnished by Jostens, the official ring supplier of the 2016/2017 WSOP Circuit season.

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