



WSOP CIRCUIT 2017-18 EVENT REPORT

Circuit Stop:	Horseshoe Hammond (Hammond, Ind.)	Date:	23 October 2017
Event:	No-Limit Hold'em Main Event	Entries:	1,247
Buy-in:	\$1,675	Prizepool:	\$1,870,500

BLAKE BATTAGLIA WINS CIRCUIT MAIN EVENT TITLE

Chicago poker pro conquers Horseshoe Hammond Main Event for first gold ring.

Blake Battaglia is the World Series of Poker Circuit's most recent Main Event Champion. The Chicago-area poker player conquered Event #10: \$1,675 No-Limit Hold'em Main Event at his home-field casino, Horseshoe Hammond, winning a debut gold ring.

"It hasn't hit me yet. It's unreal," said Battaglia, following his momentous score.

The staggering, Main Event purse left Battaglia in awe when all was said and done. On top of the golden hardware, Battaglia was awarded a WSOP cash of \$332,020 for his triumph.

Three long days of cards was what it took for Battaglia to realize his accomplishment. Along the way, as is with all poker tournaments, there were some ups and downs, but Battaglia remained on the up side throughout majority of the final stretch.

Flight A did not bode well for Battaglia, failing to hold on to his chips. However, the 31-year-old did find more luck during Flight B. He survived the second starting flight with around 125,000 in chips, leaving him in a middle-of-the-pack position.

It was not till midway through Day 2 that Battaglia really lit up the Main Event radar. He hit the one million mark in Level 21, and then went on to overtake the chip lead with a knockout in the very next level.

When the field was cut to 27 players, and a three table redraw occurred, Battaglia was still ahead. It seemed like the Illinois native could not be stopped, scoring another knockout near the end of Day 2, and eventually finishing with a noticeable advantage.

“I had a massive chip lead I’m pretty sure. Like I had almost 20% of the chips in play with just 19 [players] left,” recollected Battaglia. It was still no cake walk for the poker pro.

“I mean, today [Day 3] was tough... I just kept telling myself to stay focused play my game,” Battaglia disclosed. “I didn’t need to like press the issue.”

There was plenty of experience present on Day 3 of the Main Event, which dove right into a two-table redraw. Some of the big hitters remaining were three-time gold ring winner, Mukul Pahuja, Lytle Allen, who has five, final-table finishes in Circuit Main Events, and the defending Horseshoe Hammond Main Event Champion, Dylan Linde.

Battaglia stayed the course and made it to the unofficial final table, but had been dethroned as chip leader. The upheaval was executed by Jeff Banghart, who would prove to be Battaglia’s number one adversary.

“I know that he overtook the chip lead for a little while. When we went to the final table there was like back-to-back hands where me and him played pots together,” said Battaglia.

“He’s a good player. He was playing solid all day, from what I saw, so yeah I kind of had that feeling,” Battaglia responded when asked if he thought Banghart and himself would match up heads up.

The mano-a-mano match was an action packed one, to say the least. It did not take long, but could have even been shorter. At one point, Battaglia was one card away from glory, but got snuffed on the river.

“Oh man, the ring was half way on my finger man,” Battaglia expressed, still in disbelief of the outcome. “I just had to buckle down. I knew like to not go on tilt... But, you know, we recovered like right away.”

A recovery movement did come swiftly for Battaglia, which featured a standout clash.

“There was a huge hand where I jammed the river,” started Battaglia. “I had ace-jack. I told him it was a bluff [afterwards],” he continued “I put him on a ten and I knew the only way I’m going to get him to fold is if I just jam it, so I did.”

The pivotal hand tipped the scales toward Battaglia and ultimately led to the moment of triumph. The victory is a tremendous boost to Battaglia’s young, poker career. The father of three formerly worked as an Electrician, but recently transitioned to playing poker for a living and ended up snatching monumental, Main Event title at Horseshoe Hammond.

“I can’t believe it... Definitely ecstatic about it,” said Battaglia.

MEET THE LATEST WSOP CIRCUIT RING WINNER

Name:	Blake Battaglia	Age:	31
Nationality:	USA	Profession:	Poker Pro
Birthplace:	Chicago, Ill.	WSOP Bracelets:	0
Current Residence:	Chicago, Ill.	Previous WSOP Circuit Rings:	0

DIRECT LINKS

[FULL RESULTS](#)

[BLAKE BATTAGLIA'S OFFICIAL WSOP PLAYER PROFILE](#)

[OFFICIAL WINNER PHOTO](#)