



## WSOP CIRCUIT 2017-18 MAIN EVENT REPORT

Circuit Stop:	Horseshoe Baltimore	Date:	7 May 2018
Event:	No-Limit Hold'em Main Event	Entries:	37
Buy-in:	\$3,250	Prizepool:	\$111,000

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### **BLAKE WHITTINGTON TAKES DOWN THE HORSESHOE BALTIMORE HIGH ROLLER FOR \$49,950**

*Just a few minutes after his friend, Eric Salazar, won Event #12 at the Horseshoe Baltimore, Blake Whittington won a ring of his own, his second, in the High Roller.*

When Blake Whittington busted from the Horseshoe Baltimore Main Event in 17<sup>th</sup> on Sunday night, he had to take a moment to clear his head.

"It was just crazy because last night I was really frustrated with how the Main Event went," He explained. "I was short all day and I just grinded a very small stack all day and busted 17<sup>th</sup>. So I just took a lap around the casino and gathered my composure and I just said, 'alright let's register this High Roller.'"

By the end of play on Day 1, he bagged the second largest chip stack.

"I just got very lucky when I registered late last night to make a lot of really good hands that were good at showdown," Whittington explained. "I didn't really have to face any difficult spots. I started in level nine and I ended up bagging second in chips."

For Whittington, the final table went mostly smooth, save a couple rough spots. Approaching the money bubble, he doubled up John Richards with ace-queen against aces.

"We went from eight handed to six handed really fast," Whittington said, explaining how Alex Rocha, Justin Liberto, and Duane Hunton all fell in quick order. "There was a crazy hand where we went from eight to six. Right when we came back, I won a flip against Alex [Rocha]. Then when I doubled John [Richards], ace-queen to aces, I started to hurt a little bit, thinking this was gonna' be... We were all about even stacked at that point, so now it was gonna' be a battle."

But Whittington was fortunate enough to go on a heater as just the right time.

“I chipped up from about 200,000 to 350,000 in about two orbits,” he said. “When the bubble burst, I got really lucky against John [Richards], to win jacks versus ace-king.”

From there, Whittington had a stranglehold on three handed play. He held the chip lead for most of play, lost it for a bit but got a bit lucky in a spot with ace-four against Clayton Jiang’s pocket eights to eliminate Jiang from the tournament.

From there, he and Jonathan Gilliam had a back and forth battle that lasted a bit before Whittington made a crucial call with top pair to put Gilliam in the danger zone. Whittington won just a few hands later with his jack-six besting Gilliam’s jack-ten.

“They both played excellent, I want to make that clear,” Whittington explained. “It was a really tough battle. I’ve known Clayton since he started coming around the Circuit at the very beginning of him playing tournaments. Now I see him on Live at the Bike, and wow. He’s like this end boss cash game player. It was an honor to play with them.”

Whittington doesn’t play High Roller’s very often, but he explained that he has a lot of fun playing with them, saying that they challenge him in a different way.

“To be honest, I haven’t really played many of the High Rollers,” he said. “This is probably my third or fourth one. But I like them a lot. I enjoy very much playing with the best players and they challenge me. A lot of it you can chalk up to run good for sure. It was a really tough field. I just feel like a lucky bastard to have beat them all.”

On Monday, across the room, Whittington’s friend Eric Salazar was also at a final table. The two reached heads-up play within minutes of each other.

“It definitely felt like we needed to both deliver because it would be such an awesome story,” he said about Salazar. “We were cheering for each other between hands and across the room like, ‘Let’s go Eric!’ and ‘Let’s go Blake!’ It was pretty awesome for sure.”

And deliver they did. Both Salazar and Whittington captured rings on the same night, just a few yards away from each other.

For Whittington, this victory is a testament to getting his mind right and to clearing out his headspace after struggling with bankroll and money management early in his career.

“I’ve been out of the game for a while, a couple years,” he said. “I have had really horrible money management decisions. I was just never responsible. I think I’m finally starting to get things figured out. And I think that my results for the last couple months are a testament to the clear mind space that I’m in.”

Whittington said he plans to spend most of his summer in Vegas, hoping he can continue his heater.

For his win in the High Roller, Blake Whittington took home \$49,950 as well as his second World Series of Poker Circuit ring.

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## **MEET THE LATEST WSOP CIRCUIT RING WINNER**

Name:	Blake Whittington	Age:	26
Nationality:	USA	Profession:	Poker Pro
Birthplace:	Wilson, NC	WSOP Bracelets:	0
Current Residence:	Jacksonville, FL	Previous WSOP Circuit Rings:	1

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