



Circuit Stop: Thunder Valley
Event: Main Event
Buy-in: \$1,700

Date: January 22nd 2024
Entries: 742
Prizepool: \$1,124,130

Denis Lee Wins 2nd Ring in Thunder Valley Main Event

The eventual champion had reservations about playing Day 1A

In last fall's WSOP Circuit Series in Lake Tahoe, Denis Lee had himself quite the series. Three final tables, a WSOP Circuit ring, and roughly \$20,000 in tournament earnings. Not a bad couple of weeks.

Monday at Thunder Valley, Lee crushed that total in winning his second ring in just a few months along with ten times his Tahoe earnings with the \$207,020 first prize.

Along with doing it in impressive fashion Monday, coming in as the short stack, things could have turned out completely differently based on a Day 1 decision that had nothing to do with the cards in his hand.

Lee late-regged Day 1A, sitting with 80 big blinds to start his day. However he was seated at a table that had yet to fill its seats, in fact he was the first at the table and he was having second thoughts about playing.

Lee asked the Tournament Director if he could unregister and come back to play Day 1B instead. The TD convinced him to stick around, telling him that 80 big blinds would be the chip lead at the final table. Lee decided to stick around and give it a go.

He then had a successful day finishing up with 322,000 chips, good enough for 14th best on the day.

Needless to say, Lee was glad he stuck it out.

"I had to wait because the table didn't come...but they told me I should stick with it and I did. I had a lot of the chips (by the end of the day)."

Lee's Day 2 went well. Well enough to make Day 3 anyway, but as mentioned, he came in short-stacked. The shortest stack in fact, coming back 12th out of 12 with just 7 big blinds.

So how did he make his way from there to the title? The soft-spoken champion succinctly explained.

“I just grinded”

That he did. He immediately went to work, doubling up his stack within the first few minutes of the day and then not looking back.

He quickly built his stack back into seven figures and then doubled through start of day chip leader Dann Turner, whose day saw the opposite fortune of Lee, as his stack trended downward throughout the day, until his eventual demise in 8th place.

As for Lee, after an hour of play, the final table had been reached and he was already fourth in chips.

From there, he doubled through Turner again, then picked up kings against Joseph Spanne’s nines to eliminate him, and then had aces when Dan Sarasin jammed with kings. That sent Lee’s stack over ten million and it was off to the tile from there.

Lee’s win was not only his career-best score, but it capped a record-breaking series at Thunder Valley.

The popular Northern California casino saw records fall throughout the series, including a record \$1,124,130 prizepool in this event, its largest ever for a WSOP Circuit Main Event.

This concludes our Poker.org coverage of the Main Event, as well as what’s been a thrilling WSOP Circuit Series here at Thunder Valley Casino Resort. Keep us bookmarked at instant.poker.org for continuing coverage of the WSOP Circuit all season long.

MEET THE LATEST WSOP CIRCUIT RING WINNER

Name:	Denis Lee	Age:	N/A
Nationality:	USA	Profession:	Poker Pro
Birthplace:	N/A.	WSOP Bracelets:	0
Current Residence:	Fremont, CA	Previous Rings:	1

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