



**2012/2013 World Series of Poker Circuit
Season Nine
Harrah's New Orleans
New Orleans, Louisiana
Main Event Championship – Event 10
No-Limit Hold'em
Buy-In \$1,500 (+175)
Total Entries: 762
Prize Pool: \$1,143,000
May 17-20, 2013**

Cool Hand Luke

Luke Graham Gets Dealt a Cool Hand at Harrah's New Orleans

Florida Stockbroker Collects \$228,600 and First WSOP Circuit Gold Ring

2012-2013 WSOP Circuit Regular Season Ends on a High Note

New Orleans, LA (May 20, 2013) – The World Series of Poker Circuit season which began nearly ten months ago in Biloxi, Mississippi concluded less than 100 miles away in New Orleans. The distance might not seem great. But in reality, the tournament circuit spanned some 50,000 miles from multiple swings back and forth from coast to coast.

Harrah's New Orleans hosted the final WSOP Circuit stop of the season, which culminated in the last Main Event Championship on the schedule, a \$1,675 buy-in No-Limit Hold'em tournament.

Action began on Friday with 762 entrants, making this the largest Main Event turnout ever in the nine seasons of poker action played here in the famous Crescent City. In fact, attendance was up by ten percent over the previous year, which also set a record at the time.

Luke Graham won what can accurately be described as a thrilling victory, witnessed by hundreds of his fellow poker players gathered inside the Harrah's New Orleans showroom. He collected \$228,600 in prize money and the much-coveted and anticipated gold ring. Moreover, he also received an automatic entry into the WSOP National Championship, a seat which is valued at \$10,000. The WSOP National Championship is presented by Southern Comfort 100 Proof and will be played here in New Orleans later this week as the season finale.

The new champion is a 42-year-old stockbroker from West Palm Beach, FL. He's mostly an equity trader and part-time poker player. Up to this point, his total WSOP-related winnings had amounted to about \$70,000. Hence, this bonanza amounted to more than tripling the total sum of all previous entries. Among those previous cashes was a sixth-place finish in the Main Event at West Palm Beach, in February.

“I am ecstatic to win this,” Graham said. “The money means quite a bit to me. It's going to allow me to do a few things. I'll definitely use some of it to go out to Las Vegas this summer.”

Graham overcame serious chip disadvantages throughout the tournament. He was never among the leaders, until the very end. Graham began play at the final table ranked seventh out of nine players.

Joseph Hebert, from Metairie, LA finished as the runner up. He collected a nice consolation prize amounting to \$140,932.

There were other notable developments from this tournament, as well. These results went a long way towards deciding the final list of WSOP National Championship qualifiers. However, at the end of the night, the player who was favored to win the Casino Champion title ended up with the crown. Joseph McKeehen was all but assured of the victory in that race and locked up the prize with the close of the last three events which all concluded on this day.

The tournament generated a prize pool totaling \$1,143,000. The top 81 finishers collected prize money. Some of those who cashed included Robert Panitch (16th), gold bracelet winner Nick Jivkov (20th), Daniel Doucet (28th), Jonathan Tamayo (51st), Ryan Lengan (53rd), Adam Teasdale, and others.

Final Table Finishers:

Ninth place went to Pavan Bhatia a 26-year-old project engineer from Allen, TX. He's cashed for six figures twice previously, but was seeking his first WSOP-related victory. Bhatia started out well as the third ranked player in chips, but suffered a tough early going and exited first. Ninth place paid \$21,591.

Eighth place went to Ben Mintz, a 29-year-old poker pro from New Orleans. He's one of his hometown's most ardent cheerleaders as a proud fan of its spots, teams, unique culture, fine restaurants, and even finer people. Mintz hoped to win what would have been a thrilling victory in his backyard but suffered some bad luck late. Mintz took 75th in the 2011 WSOP Main Event (Las Vegas), and has three major tournament wins on his resume. \$27,192 was the reward for Mintz.

Seventh place went to Tripp Kirk. He's a 28-year-old professional poker player from Atlanta, GA. Kirk owns two WSOP Circuit gold rings, including the 2012 Main Event which was at (formally) Harrah's St. Louis. Kirk came in with one of the lower stacks and busted about three hours into the action. He collected \$34,667.

Sixth place went to Dan Schmiech. He's a professional gambler who is 52-year-old from Houston. He's won a WSOP gold bracelet in 2005 making him the only such champion at the final table. Schmiech earned \$44,748 in prize money.

Fifth place went to Rogen Chhabta, a 39-year-old attorney from Madison, MS. He's cashed in several online tournaments, and final tabled the Main Event at Tunica. So this was his second Main Event final table this year. Chhabta collected \$58,487.

Fourth place went to the early chip leader – Daniel "Mr. Professional" Weinman, a “retired lumberjack and current golf hustler,” he says. He's 25-years-old. Weinman says he has zero gold rings and is famous for a tournament where he did not cash. But he will be semi-famous at last for a while after cashing in this one, which paid \$77,438.

Third place went to Jasra Khodayarkhani, a 23-year-old poker pro from Plano, TX. He's cashed in the past five WSOP Circuit Main Events where he's played, but is still seeking his first win. This was his best WSOP-related showing to date and biggest cash prize. Third place paid \$103,899.

Second place went to Joseph Hebert is a 31-year-old server from Metairie, LA. He's previously won poker events at the Beau Rivage (Mississippi). He's also a new father of a 10-month-old baby. Hebert earned \$140,932

First place went to Luke Graham is a 42-year-old stock trader from West Palm Beach, FL. He's had 6th and 12th place finishes in previous Main Events held elsewhere. He's an avid golfer and reader of history. First place paid \$228,600.

Once more, here's the breakdown of finishers and prize money:

1	Luke Graham	PORT ST. LUCIE, FL	\$228,600
2	Joseph Hebert	METAIRIE, LA	\$140,932
3	Kasra Khodayarkhani	PLANO, TX	\$103,899
4	Daniel Weinman	ATLANTA, GA	\$77,438
5	Rogen Chhabra	MADISON, MS	\$58,487
6	Dan Schmiech	HOUSTON, TX	\$44,748
7	Tripp Kirk	ATLANTA, GA	\$34,667
8	Ben Mintz	NEW ORLEANS, LA	\$27,192
9	Pavan Bhatia	PLANO, TX	\$21,591

Tournament Notes

- The four-day tournament began with 762 players divided into two starting flights. After 12 hours of play on Day One, only 125 survivors remained.
- Day Two resumed with 125 players and concluded after another 12-hour session with just 11 survivors.
- Day Three began with 11 players and quickly consolidated to a final table. The finale took about nine hours to complete.
- The final table included two gold ring winners – Tripp Kirk and Ben Mintz.

- The final table included one gold bracelet winner – Dan Schmiech. However, Robert Cheung, another gold bracelet winner took 11th place.

Luke Graham wins an automatic seat into the \$1 Million 2012-13 WSOP National Championship Presented by Southern Comfort 100 Proof. The third-annual championship awards a WSOP gold bracelet. It is being played here in New Orleans for the first time.

The 2012-2013 WSOP Circuit regular season has now officially ended

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