

2015/2016 World Series of Poker Circuit

Horseshoe Tunica

Event #1

No-Limit Holdem

Buy-In: \$365

Total Entries: 276

Total Prize Pool: \$82,800

January 21-22, 2016

Johnny McNally Wins Opening Event at the WSOP Circuit at the Horseshoe Tunica

The painting contractor from Memphis earns his first WSOP Circuit ring and nearly \$20,000.

Tunica, Miss. (22 January 2016) – Johnny McNally became the first winner at the World Series of Poker Circuit at the Horseshoe Tunica on Friday. He emerged victorious in Event #1: \$365 No-Limit Hold'em, earning \$19,875 and his first WSOP Circuit ring.

When the final day of the tournament began, McNally didn't look like he had much of a chance. He started the day in sixth place out of the remaining seven players with a mere 182,000 in chips. In contrast, the leader at the time (Happy Nakhoneinh, who went on to finish in second place), had nearly a million. In fact, McNally's fortunes looked so bleak that the previous night, as the players were bagging up their chips, one of McNally's friends jokingly suggested that he try to stealthily switch his chips with another player's.

Such shenanigans turned out not to be necessary, though. McNally returned Friday afternoon with his short stack of 182,000 in chips, and before long he was among the front runners. "I got hot early," he explained later. "I doubled up with pocket tens versus nines. And then three hands later I flopped the nuts. One guy was already all-in, and I got all-in against another player, too, so I more than doubled up."

From there, McNally coasted as four other players were eliminated fairly quickly, leaving just three players in contention: McNally, Nakhoneinh, and Mark Weatherwax. Three-handed play was markedly different than the first part of the day. After the four quick bustouts, the three remaining players faced off in a virtual stalemate that lasted nearly four hours. "It was long," McNally said of the three-handed battle. "We just played and played and played. I had a million, this guy had 900,000, and the other guy had 800,000. I got down to 500,000 and then just battled my way back."

After he did, it wasn't long before Weatherwax fell in third place. The heads-up match only lasted about 20 minutes before Nakhoneinh followed him to the exit, leaving McNally holding all the chips.

When asked how he plans to celebrate, McNally said he just wanted to spend some time with his family. "I'm going to go home. And," he joked, "I'm going to give my wife all the money." Then he added, a little more seriously, "and I'm going to give this ring to my daughters."

McNally, a painting contractor, says he doesn't play much poker, although he likes to come down here to the Horseshoe because it's convenient from his home in Memphis. Yet for someone who doesn't play much, he certainly fares well at this venue. A year ago, McNally ran deep in this same event at the Circuit, finishing in 17th place. And after winning this tournament today, he said he might try his hand in a few more events at this Circuit stop.

The tournament started on Thursday at 11:00, with 276 players. The top 30 finished in the money. Among them was Doug "Rico" Carli, who holds the record for most career cashes on the WSOP Circuit. He extended his own record to 99. Carli finished in 20th place (\$854). Also finishing in the money was Scott Stewart, who won Casino Champion honors here at the Horseshoe last season. Stewart was one of the last players to be eliminated Thursday night, eventually bowing out in 10th place (\$19,875).

Full results from the event are available on WSOP.com.

At the conclusion of this event, Johnny McNally jumps into the lead in the Casino Champion race. The player who accumulates the most overall points in the twelve gold ring tournaments at the Horseshoe Tunica earns the title of Casino Champion and receives an automatic entry into the \$1 million 2016 WSOP Global Casino Championship. The winner of the Horseshoe Tunica Main Event earns an automatic entry to the Global Casino Championship as well. All players who cash in ring events will receive points that apply to both the Casino Champion race and the season-long race to claim one of the 50 at-large Global Casino Championship bids awarded to the top point earners throughout the season. More information on the points system is available on WSOP.com.

Here is the list of gold ring winners from the Horseshoe Tunica so far:

EVENT #1: Johnny McNally defeated 276 players (\$365 No-Limit Hold'em) for \$19,875.

With the first tournament now wrapped up, there are still 11 more gold ring events before the WSOP Circuit at the Horseshoe Tunica concludes on Feb 1.

All rings at the Horseshoe Tunica are furnished by Jostens, the official ring supplier of the 2015-2015 WSOP Circuit season.

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