

**2015/2016 World Series of Poker Circuit
Season 12
Harrah's Atlantic City
Atlantic City, NJ
Event #8
No-Limit Hold'em Six Max
Buy-In: \$300 (+\$65)
Total Entries: 165
Prize Pool: \$49,500
March 22-23, 2016**



Joe Rodriguez Wins First Gold Ring and \$13,860

Long island pro stages impressive comeback during marathon heads-up battle

Atlantic City, NJ (March 23, 2016) — Joe Rodriguez is the champion of Event #8 at Harrah's Atlantic City, defeating a field of 165 entries to win his first gold ring. In addition to the jewelry, Rodriguez earned the top prize of \$13,860 and 50 points toward the race for seats in the WSOP Global Casino Championship.

The champ is a 26-year-old pro from Long Island, and he's been playing poker full time for about two years. "My friend introduced me to the game when I was 19, and I thought it was stupid at first," he said. "After playing for a little bit, though, I found out there's a lot more to it. It's a hard game."

It certainly can be. Rodriguez's luck ran afoul midway through Day 1 when a nasty two-outer knocked him back down to starting stack. He proceeded to bluff off half of his remaining chips a couple orbits later, dropping all the way down to 4,500 chips. Things turned around in the second half of the day, though, and by the time the field was reduced to six players, Rodriguez was second in chips and breathing down the neck of the leader.

The final table began on Tuesday afternoon, and Rodriguez's strategy played out well. "I just watched everyone take each other out," he said. Just over an hour after play began, Rodriguez was heads up with DJ MacKinnon for the ring, facing a significant chip disadvantage. MacKinnon was in a familiar spot too, two seasons removed from a runner-up finish in the same six-max event right here at Harrah's.

"Against a player like DJ?" Rodriguez shook his head. "I didn't think I ever really had a chance. I just knew that I had to keep going. It took me a while to figure him out. At first, I thought he was really, really tight, but I just had to adjust to him heads up."

