



WSOP CIRCUIT 2017-18 EVENT REPORT

Circuit Stop:	Harrah's New Orleans (New Orleans, LA)	Date:	18 May 2018
Event:	No-Limit Hold'em High Roller	Entries:	128
Buy-in:	\$2,200	Prizepool:	\$256,000

MAURICE HAWKINS WINS 11TH RING

Poker pro from Florida continues Circuit dominance, wins 11th ring just days after Valentin Vornicu broke their tie atop the all-time ring leaderboard.

The last stop of the 2017-2018 World Series of Poker Circuit season in New Orleans has arguably been the most exciting stop of the season. With Valentin Vornicu winning back-to-back events at the start of the series to break the tie atop the all-time leaderboard with Maurice Hawkins, it's only fitting that the two continue to jockey as the series hits the home stretch.

Hawkins won his 11th Circuit title on Friday night in the \$2,200 no-limit hold'em high roller event. The poker pro from Florida moved back within one win of another tie atop the leaderboard with Vornicu by defeating 128 entries and taking home \$71,680.

"Who is that guy?" joked Hawkins when asked about catching Vornicu for the all-time lead. "I mean, I heard of him, but I don't really know who he is."

The 38-year-old is notorious for saving his best work for when the most money is on the line. This is Hawkins' first win in a high roller event, but he has four Circuit main event wins and two more wins in \$1,000 prelims.

His latest high roller victory moved him over the \$2 million mark in WSOP earnings alone. Hawkins wasn't shy about admitting that he brings out his best when the most is on the line. When he plays his best, he thinks he is one of the greatest of all time.

"I mean, see, the G.O.A.T. shows up to the real tournaments," said Hawkins. "Mains I win, high roller I win, \$1k's I win. The G.O.A.T. is the G.O.A.T. That's it. That's all I got to say."

Hawkins battled Peter Vitantonio heads-up and although Vitantonio had better than a 2-to-1 chip lead for a good portion of the match, Hawkins was able to battle and back and pull out another victory.

“I mean, straight up, it was designed for me to win today,” said Hawkins. “I coolered that guy over and over again. He was playing great and I was playing great. He just got coolered and I think he got frustrated at the end because he just shipped bottom pair on me.”

Hawkins strives for greatness every time he sits down at the table. He holds himself to a higher standard than others might. Last year, despite a fourth-place finish in this same event, he wasn't happy with his play.

“Last year, I got fourth in this. I left and went home because I was pissed,” said Hawkins. “I didn't even stay and play the main because I didn't think I was playing well enough. And then look at what I did last summer.”

Hawkins took his dissatisfaction with last year's New Orleans high roller and worked on his game in the weeks leading up to the WSOP at the Rio. He made two final tables last summer, finishing ninth in 'The Marathon' and a sixth-place finish in the monster stack.

He thinks that with the way that he's playing he will win a WSOP bracelet within three years.

“It's going to happen. It has to,” said Hawkins.

Behind all of Hawkins' success on the Circuit lies a desire to succeed and push through all the struggles he's been through both on and off the felt.

“I take great pride and pleasure in ruining people's lives on the felt,” said Hawkins. “You're damn right I do. You know why? Because there was a lot of heartaches, tears, and cries, late nights, and stressed babies, and frustrated wives, and trying to provide for your family, and have a life and friends, and just get all the things you've always wanted, and do this and, and, and. There is a lot of frustration that comes into that. So, when it comes to what I put my pride into, I show up.”

MEET THE LATEST WSOP CIRCUIT RING WINNER

Name: Maurice Hawkins

Age: 38

Nationality: American

Profession: Professional Poker Player

Birthplace: St. Louis, MO

WSOP Bracelets: 0

Current Residence: Coral Springs, FL

Previous WSOP Circuit Rings: 10

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