

Sagebrush Cowhorse Classic

May 8-12, 2012

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The Sagebrush Cowhorse Classic show has a longstanding reputation for fun entertainment and a great payout, and this year was no exception. The show topped the \$100,000 mark to payout \$100,258 in all. The NRHA reining was removed from the schedule and the show date was moved to May 8-12 to coincide with the May 3-6 NRCHA Hackamore Classic show.

Some exhibitors stayed for both shows, others came and went as their schedules allowed, but both shows offered memorable parties, tough competition, great weather and facilities. Colorado State Fair horse show manager, Lindsay Wadhams and Sarah Clymer organized a party held Friday night during the Hackamore Classic. It was the "Taste of Colorado" and was sponsored by several exhibitors and local businesses that provided food and drinks. A Tuesday night barbecue with live music was held during the Sagebrush show and sponsored by Susan and Wilson Lyle of Discount Tire, Co. A saddle was donated by Lyle and Holly Major of Major Tack Barn to raise funds for the Colorado Reined Cowhorse Association. Pamela Bailey was the lucky winner.

Chris Dawson, Jacksboro, Texas, won the 25 entry open derby riding his 4 year old stallion, Travelin Jonez. He scored 149 points to win the herd and cow work portions of the derby and 146 points to place 3rd in the reined work to win a Tad Knowles trophy saddle, Gary Wiggins buckle and \$6,512 for his efforts. His horse is by Smart Chic Olena out of Travelin With Sass, bred by Steve Roseberry of Ohio.

"I was introduced to Steve Roseberry through reining trainer Van Luse," said Dawson. "Steve sent him to me to start and I liked him but I could not find anybody to buy him, so I made payments over a year to buy him myself."

The partnership of trainer Zane Davis and owner John Semanik continues to thrive, making headlines at the Hackamore Classic as well as the Sagebrush show.

Davis won reserve honors in the high scoring open derby riding Semanik's 4 year old mare, Chickarey. They placed 2nd in herd work and tied for 2nd in cow work to earn \$4,488 in all. She is sired by Dual Rey and out of Sonita Lena Chic, a cutting mare shown by the late Bucky James, she is a half sister to the duo's champion gelding Reymanator.

Although Semanik typically buys his prospects thru the NCHA yearling sales, this mare was purchased as a started two year old from Linda Holmes. "I ride a lot of Dual Rey offspring and Linda will sometimes send me one that she thinks might fit me," said Davis.

Davis also won the 20-entry novice horse derby riding Red Tag Olena for owners Mark and Nan Channer, Missoula, Mont. He is by Pecas Olena out of SR Grand Prix, winning the herd and cow work to earn \$2,015 in his first show. "This is their first cowhorse and the Channers came to the show in Pueblo. I can't say enough about what a great job the club did running the show," said Davis. Jay McLaughlin was reserve champion riding Smooth CD to earn \$1,580 for owners Danny Motes and Winston Hansma. He also placed sixth in the open to earn \$1,738 at the show.

EJ Laubscher, Colby, Kans., won the 13 entry intermediate open derby division riding Teresa Chrisler's 5 year old mare, Noras Nitro. He purchased the Nitro Dual Doc mare from Black Rock Ranch as a yearling, selling her to Chrisler as a 3 year old. Like Dawson and Davis, Laubscher did well at both NRCHA and CRCA shows.

"I was worried to show her twice, having to show her hard at both shows," said Laubscher, winning over \$4,500 on her at the Hackamore Classic show and over \$2,000 at the Sagebrush show. "It is hard for horses to stay good in a hackamore at back-to-back shows, but she is so honest that I did show her in the hackamore at the Sagebrush. " She was injured after winning the NRCHA limited open derby last fall and was only ridden thirty days before the May shows.

It can be bittersweet to be the reserve champion by only one point, but if you did not win, it is sweet to place second and third like Brad Lund in the

intermediate open derby. He showed Eric Dunn's 4 year old gelding Wright on Tari to the reserve title, also earning paychecks in the novice and open divisions to win \$2,464 at the Sagebrush show.

"He's a good horse that has had bad luck until Pueblo," said Lund, who won the Hackamore Classic intermediate open division and novice derby divisions and placed 5th in the open to earn over \$13,000. He is by Lenas Wright On and out of Shiney Tari, also the dam of Sagebrush open bridle spectacular champion Boonie Tunes.

Lund and Ginas Pepto earned 3rd place paychecks in the intermediate open, also placing in the novice derby division. Sanders Ranch, Louisburg, Kans., owns the 4 year old One Time Pepto gelding.

Lavert Avent won the 12-entry \$2,000 added limited open derby and was reserve champion in the Level I division riding T Tari Freckles for Robert Norris' Tee Cross Ranch. They tied for high score in the fence work to win the championship buckle and \$1,045 in all. Avent grew up in a ranching family in Stratford, Texas, and has trained horses for Norris for four years. The win was especially sweet because he underwent neck surgery this spring and was laid up for six weeks prior to the Sagebrush show.

The pretty gelding represents generations of Tee Cross Ranch breeding. He is by their home raised stallion, Tari Pines For You, by Doc Tari out of a Poco Pine mare. His dam is a daughter of their other longtime ranch stallion, Smokin' Jose. Norris had been a partner in the Super Syndicate decades ago and had purchased both stallions, Doc Tari and Smokin Jose, at the syndicate sale. Lance Sheffel was reserve champion riding Dulce Lil Toy for owner Jason Saffert.

To be successful requires determination, sacrifice and opportunity. Australian cowboy Lee Deacon put all that together and won the Level I championship riding Ron Dawson's AR Smart Little Cat, scoring 428.5 points to earn \$882 for his efforts.

"I worked at a coal mine for two years saving up money to come here and left behind my girlfriend, too," said Deacon of Rockhampton, Queensland, AUS.

He grew up a cowboy, learning reining and camp drafting, and working for two of the best reiners in Australia, John Wicks and Warren Backhouse. His father was a top 5 bareback rider and traveled to the US in 2000 to ride with the legendary late Bill Horn. He connected with Chris Dawson when the trainer did some clinics in Australia.

Most competitors can relate to the thought that sometimes the farther that you drive to a show, the more determined you are to win! You have hours in the cab to visualize your performance. The out-of-state non pros definitely outscored the locals at the Sagebrush show.

California cowgirl Ramona Wold won the non pro, intermediate and novice derby divisions riding her 5 year old roan mare, Glamorous Chic to earn \$2,308 in all. Raised by the Wolds, she is by Chic Please out of a Tangy Classy Peppy mare. "Our son Pierce and I were there to see her born, so she is really special to me," said Wold. "I have never felt so confident down the fence on anything until riding her, she is sure footed and will take care of me."

Lorna Neel represented Texas well, winning the Amateur division, and non pro hackamore and tied to win the reserve titles in the non pro and intermediate divisions to earn \$2,661 in all. Her gelding was bred by Hoggett Ranch and is by Zezes Pepto Cat by Zeze Gunsmoke. Neel has pride that he is the first foal by Zezes Pepto Cat, representing second generation of champions shown by the Neel family. Husband Tom won the Sagebrush Cowhorse Classic show riding Zeze Gunsmoke both derby years and daughter Jennifer won this year's non pro bridle spectacular riding Zezes Pepto Cat.

Another winner that traveled far and showed a home raised horse was Florida cowgirl, Morgan Holmes. She tied Neel for reserve honors in the non pro and intermediate divisions riding the mare Im Dun R U, by their stallion Dun It Big. "My Dad has worked really hard with me every day to get me riding her right, she is a good horse, but I have been used to riding older horses," said Holmes. "Her dam was my Mom's good rope horse, an appendix mare by our old stallion Photon."

The show in Pueblo was also a family affair for the Holmes' as dad Jay was raised in Pueblo and Morgan's mom, Rhonda, in Colorado Springs. "My whole family is here, both grandparents and my cousins are here showing," said Holmes. Jens Naglestad was reserve champion in the amateur derby riding Itchi Mint.

A local cowgirl, Melissa Gard, won the non pro limited derby riding her 5 year old Matt Dillon Dun It gelding named Smart Little Dillon. "Thanks to Keith Vogel and Lauren Porter, Kyle Trahern and Carla Moore and Chris Dawson for all helping me," said Gard. She purchased him from trainer Robbie Boyce and is excited about the new AQHA boxing class and the NRCHA World Show.

The 19-entry open bridle spectacular offered \$10,000 added in prize money and was a fight to the finish, featuring top horses and high scores throughout the contest. Boyd Rice scored 151 points riding Boonie Tunes to win the herd work and the overall title, earning \$5,099. His 147 point score in the cow work was only a three-way tie for third place in that portion with Jim Cook and Ken Wold. Darren Miller and JD Yates marked 149 points to tie for the high cow work score.

But back to Rice, he quickly departed the fairgrounds after his ride, hurrying to the NCHA Breeders Invitational cutting in Tulsa, OK. What a compliment it is when your horse is so well known that someone else can just step in and give your interview. Nikki Vander Ark, girlfriend of Chris Dawson, did just that.

"He is by Peptoboonsmal out of Shiney Tari, he is a 6-year-old and his owner Danny Poole just made the non pro finals at the Super Stakes Classic. They mostly cut on him, but Boyd comes here and so they cowhorse on him too. Boonie Tunes is a pretty dang cool horse," said Vander Ark.

Zane Davis was reserve champion riding another cool horse named Reymanator. "He has only been in the bridle for a few weeks, so I was livin' on a prayer to get thru it," said Davis. "I was really happy with him to get thru two shows in the bridle."

Local Pueblo cowboy JD Yates stopped by the fairgrounds to show Oh Cay N Short to a win in the Limited Open Bridle Spectacular event. He earned \$978 for

owners Kevin and Sydney Knight, Peoria, AZ. Dave Dillman won reserve honors riding Camille Yax' Smart Lil Chexy.

With \$5,000 added to the non pro bridle spectacular class, it also drew tough competitors riding their best through all 3 events. Jennifer Neel and Zezes Pepto Cat scored 438 points to win, placing 2nd in the herd and reined work and marking 148 points to win the cow work and earn \$2,445 in all.

Virgil Valdez and He Be Fierce were reserve champions, winning the herd work with 146 points to earn \$1,872 for their efforts. Lindsay Wadhams was reserve champion non pro bridle and won the intermediate division riding her great gelding, Spursuasion, winning the reined work by scoring 149 points. She won the novice non pro bridle spectacular, winning a grand total of \$3,674 in all.