

Daily Chatter

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Two much! Uno Dos for Johnson and Shepard Amaden wins Non-Pro with 228



Left to right: Open champion Uno Dos Seventyseven and owner Jim Johnson; trainer Austin Shepard, who also won last year's Open title; Rachel Johnson; Open reserve champion Purple Lynx and owner, Jennie Johnson.

It was Uno Dos in more ways than one for trainer Austin Shepard and owner Jim Johnson, when Johnson's Uno Dos Seventyseven won the Eastern National Open Championship. Purple Lynx, owned by Johnson's daughter, Jennie, and also ridden by Shepard, finished as Open reserve champion.

"This takes the cake – to finish one-two," said Johnson, who was Non-Pro reserve champion on Uno Dos Seventyone here last year. Last weekend, Rachel, 17, Johnson's youngest daughter, won the Senior Youth division and collected her third Eastern National title.

Working deep in the first bunch of the finals, Shepard piloted Uno Dos Seventyseven to mark 222; midway through the second bunch, he scored 221.5 on Purple Lynx.

"It just kind of fit," said Shepard. "That's the only way you can win, if things fit. It just seemed like every cow that I wanted to cut ended up being

pretty good.

"On Purple Lynx, my first cow wasn't very good – it ran and ran," he added. "But the horse was smart and finally broke it down in the middle of the pen. No matter what kind of cow you work on him, he can handle it."

Uno Dos Seventyseven is an 11-year-old gelded son of Peppy San Badger. His name refers to the order of finish of his sire and dam in the 1977 NCHA Futurity.

"He's a great horse," said Johnson. "He just gives all of his heart."

Uno Dos Seventyseven has been in Sam and Austin Shepard's barn for seven years – Johnson is the third owner since the Shepards have handled the horse. "He's a good old horse," said Austin. "He tries hard and has a lot of talent."

Continued on page 2



NCHA Assistant Executive Directory Mike Kelly presents Lata Lightsey with a check from the American Quarter Horse Association for \$7,500 for the North Mississippi CHA, winner of the AQHA/NCHA Affiliate Challenge at the Eastern National Championships.

Mike Kelly presented Mark Mills with a check from AQHA for Blue Bonnet CHA's second-place tie with the Florida CHA in the AQHA/NCHA Affiliate Challenge.

Continued from page 1

Shepard purchased seven-year-old Purple Lynx on Jennie's behalf last summer from trainer Mark Michaels. "He's just like the other one (Uno Dos Seventyseven)," said Shepard. "They're going to have him for a long time. He's

Thanks

Millennium Trailers/NCHA Eastern National Championships cutters would like to thank the following people for providing delicious hot, homemade lunches to cutters and their families every day, in the Hospitality Room:

- North Mississippi CHA
- Mid-South CHA
- Magnolia CHA
- Music City Futurity
- North Texas CHA
- North Texas AQHA
- Blue Bonnet CHA
- National Barrel Horse Association
- Southern Futurity
- Florida CHA
- Suncoast CHA
- Signs First



You say it's your birthday!

These NCHA members are celebrating their birthday today.

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Non-Pro champion Lori Brown Amaden (right) with Holly and Sydney Francois, wife and daughter of trainer Lee Francois.



\$10,000 Amateur champion Kevin Ruckner with his new bride, Lorri.

a really nice horse.”

228 wins Non-Pro title

Lori Brown Amaden, of Athens, Texas, raised the roof with a 228-point run in the Non-Pro finals. Hers was the highest score from all divisions in 12 days of competition.

Amaden and All Night Bingo waited a long time for their first big win – in more ways than one. Amaden, who had finished fourth in the Non-Pro go-round, drew dead last in Saturday’s finals. She had never won a major event - never even broken a 220. Her highest mark in the five years she has been cutting was the 219 she scored in the go-round on Friday.

“I was scared to death,” said Amaden. “I’d never cut at the end and I’ve never had to be that aggressive about my cuts. It was probably an advantage going last because it made me go in there and cut and not play it safe. I couldn’t believe the 228. I knew it was good, but I didn’t realize it was that good.”

Amaden, 35, a graphics designer for Trinity Valley Community College in Athens, acquired All Night Bingo, now 12, and held on to him in a divorce settlement. “He’s the only horse I’ve ever shown,” she said “And he’s the one thing that helped me survive the divorce. He was an excellent horse to start on because he would step down to my level and as I grew, he stepped up.”

Trainer Lee Francois won the Open go-round with 225 on the Bingo Hickory gelding and finished fourth in the Open finals with 218.5. “Lee has helped me a lot,” noted Amaden. “I’ve learned how to ride my horse instead of just letting him tote me along.”

Neely takes reserve

Benjie Neely, 30, of Lyons, Georgia, placed as reserve champion of the Non-Pro division with 222.5 points on homegrown Smart Little Glo, by Little Trona.

“I won the Southern Futurity on this horse a few months ago, so it was fun to let him come back here and show again,” said Neely, who was \$10,000 Novice/Non-Pro champion at the Eastern National Finals in 2001. “He’s kind of a dream horse.”

Currently, Neely and Smart Little Glo are ranked tenth in NCHA Non-Pro World Championship standings and Neely plans to continue hauling in hopes of placing in the Top Five by year’s end.

“I’ve never done that (haul for the World),” she explained. “He’s real solid and has never been any trouble. I just want to enjoy him this year.”

Neely manages her family’s breeding farm in Lyons.

The honeymoon’s not over

Marriage agrees with Kevin Rucker. He and Lorri Harmon tied the knot on Friday, March 12, at the Historic Stock-

yards in Fort Worth, and spent their honeymoon at the Eastern National Finals in Jackson. Altogether, Kevin qualified for the finals of the \$10,000 Amateur, the \$20,000 Non-Pro and the \$50,000 Amateur, and crowned the week with a win in the \$10,000 Amateur on Arizona Slim.

“It’s the biggest cutting I’ve ever won,” said Rucker, who worked first in the first bunch and scored 222 points. “My horse deserved it. He’s worked hard.”

Following the advice of his helpers, Rucker cut three solid cows. “Mark (Mills) said all the cows looked good and to just cut clean and get something that would set up for me.

“After I went, I was pretty nervous,” he added. “I had to go outside and wait. I couldn’t handle the hollering and screaming.”

Rucker, who manages the service department for Trane Air Conditioning in Fort Worth, found Arizona Slim, by Freckles Playboy out of a Doc O’Lena daughter, on the Internet two and a-half years ago and traded a Kit Dual filly for the 20-year-old gelding.

“He’s been around forever,” Rucker noted. “Terry Riddle trained him and made the semi-finals of the NCHA Futurity. He had four or five owners. He’s amazing. I haven’t tuned on him all week – haven’t been to the practice pen. He just stays turned out all the time.”

AQHA/NCHA Affiliate Challenge Scores

The AQHA/NCHA Affiliate Challenge brings a “team” concept to the Millennium Industries/NCHA Eastern National Championships. The top 10 scoring affiliates at this show will earn cash awards totaling \$27,000 from the American Quarter Horse Association. The program is designed to reward participation as well as excellence, with points awarded as follows:

- 10 points Enter and Show in a Class
- 25 points Make the Finals of a Class
- 25 points Place 3rd - 10th in the Finals of a Class
- 40 points Reserve Champion of a Class
- 50 points Champion of a Class

Here’s a look at the scores final scores from the Eastern National Championships:

Affiliate	Points
North Mississippi CHA.....	1,020
Bluebonnet CHA.....	855
Florida CHA.....	855
Great Lakes CHA.....	845
Louisiana CHA.....	750
Kentucky CHA.....	610
Oil Belt CHA.....	595
Central Texas CHA.....	565
Sun Coast CHA.....	515
Lone Star CHA.....	490
Mississippi CHA.....	440
Chisholm Trail CHA.....	430
Longhorn CHA.....	390
West Tennessee CHA.....	390
Area 18 CHA.....	385
Middle Tennessee CHA.....	375
Magnolia Classic CHA.....	365
West Point CHA.....	345
Southeast Cutting.....	340
Southeast Texas CHA.....	330
East Coast CHA.....	325
Indiana CHA.....	310
Waller CHA.....	300
Double Eagle CHA.....	285
Live Oak CHA.....	285
Rose Country CHA.....	285
Peach State CHA.....	280
Wateree CHA.....	265
Georgia CHA.....	245
State Of Missouri CHA.....	245
Heart Of Dixie CHA.....	240
Mid-south CHA.....	230
Ontario CHA.....	220
West Central Texas CHA.....	195

Affiliate	Points
Northern Illinois CHA.....	190
Ozark Mountain CHA.....	190
Southeastern Oklahoma CHA.....	180
Red River CHA.....	175
Western Oklahoma CHA.....	175
Northeast Louisiana CHA.....	160
North Texas CHA.....	145
Kansas CHA.....	140
Central Oklahoma CHA.....	125
CHA of Nebraska.....	125
Northeast CHA.....	120
East Tennessee CHA.....	105
Ohio CHA.....	95
Shining M CHA.....	95
Southern Cutters Assn.....	85
White River CHA.....	75
Southwest Oklahoma CHA.....	70
Northern Piedmont CHA.....	60
Nueces Canyon CHA.....	50
Beef Empire CHA.....	45
Sowega CHA.....	45
Central Savannah River Area CHA.....	40
Northeast Mississippi CHA.....	40
River City CHA.....	40
Nevada Reined Cow CHA.....	35
Big Country CHA.....	30
Iowa CHA.....	20
Montana CHA.....	20
Utah CHA.....	20
Appalachian CHA.....	10
C S Cutters.....	10
Kern County CHA.....	10
Muenster Cutting Horse Assn.....	10