

NSHA finds new way to attract competitors



Katie Moon and Master Frickles were the NSHA Classic Amateur and Classic \$55,000 Pro Am champions.

Horse groups are looking for new ways to attract exhibitors during these challenging economic times. The National Stock Horse Association took a novel approach to attract competitors to its inaugural NSHA Classic that was so successful it will probably use it next year.

Divisions at the event held in Tulare, California, in February were based on lifetime earnings according to Equi-Stat, a database started in 1985 and owned by Cowboy Publishing Group. Equi-Stat researches and compiles statistics for a wide variety of equine disciplines that include reined cow horse, reining,

cutting, barrel racing, ranch versatility and pleasure. It includes all money paid at events that show secretaries and associations turn in to it. Cowboy Publishing Group also publishes *Performance Horse*, *Western Horseman*, *Quarter Horse News* and *Barrel Horse News*.

"Because we think Equi-Stat is the 'Bible' of statistical information, we decided to use its data to determine divisions at the NSHA Classic," said John Ward, one of the founders of the show. "We feel it does a great job in keeping track of competitors' earnings and thought it would provide a more level playing field for exhibitors in each class."

Russell Dilday, who helped found the NSHA

five years ago, is hopeful the new format will catch on in the reined cow horse industry. Another NSHA founder, seven-time National Reined Cow Horse Association Snaffle Bit Futurity Champion Ted Robinson, predicted the NSHA Classic will be held again in 2010.

"It's a 99.9 percent go-ahead on having it next year. A lot of action will be going on," he said.

The Classic, plus a Bridle Sweepstakes, attracted 179 entries that vied for a piece of a \$109,961 total purse, of which \$34,000 was added money. Riders in the Classic Open division had to have lifetime earnings of \$200,000 or more in order to compete in that class.

The Intermediate Open division featured riders with \$15,000 up to \$200,000 in lifetime earnings, while Limited Open competitors had won \$15,000 or less. The Non-Pro division was open to exhibitors who had \$100,000 or more in lifetime earnings. Intermediate Non-Pros had to have earned less than \$100,000, and Amateur riders had to have lifetime earnings of \$10,000 or less.

The \$5,000 Pro Am division featured riders who had earned \$5,000 or less. A First Timer division was offered to anyone with no lifetime earnings as of Jan. 1, 2009, according to Equi-Stat.

Divisions in the horse show classes, as well as aged events, were also based on Equi-Stat statistics, explained NSHA Classic show manager Jake Gorrell.

"Money won is money won," he said. "There should be no distinction between money earned at a horse show versus money won at aged events."

"Even with the current economic crisis in America, our [NSHA] entries are up and the spectators are excited. The goal of running a business in these times, or any times, is to bring in new clients." ☞

NUMERICALLY SPEAKING

55 mph

The speed at which some Quarter Horse racehorses have been clocked at the track.

1970

The first year the National Cutting Horse Association Derby was held.

\$32.9 million

Total earnings of horses sired by High Brow Cat, cutting's No. 1 leading sire, as of March 2009.

2004

The year AQHA began registering horses that it previously deemed ineligible because of "excessive white."