

2023 NRBC Non Pro Finalists Decided *Fappani Tops Non Pro Preliminary Round*



Following three full days of competition with the largest Non Pro field ever drawn for the National Reining Breeders Classic, the Non Pro Classic finalists were determined. Topping the field was Tish Fappani piloting Gunna Chic Dream (ARC Gunna Sparkya x Magnum Chic Dunit), co-owned with husband Andrea, to a 223 to lead the Level 4.


The Level 3 and Level 2 preliminary high score went to Kelsey Price, who on Day Two of the show earned the score of 220.5, which brings her back to the Finals in the L4, L3 and L2 divisions. She also claimed the Novice Horse Non Pro Champion title with that preliminary score on the mare In My Glory Days (SG Frozen Enterprise x Gunners Glory) she co-owns with husband Kole.

In the Level 1, Paul Queen rode Makendiamonds (Whizkey N Diamonds x Makeit N Tinseltown), a mare owned

by Dorothy Queen, to the preliminary high score of 218.5, also earning a bid to the L4, L3 and L2 Finals. The score topped the Prime Time Non Pro division, where it took a handicap of 216.5 to make it back to the Finals.

Kim Muehlstaetter rode Whizful Thinkin (Spooks Gotta Whiz x TR Miss Graygun) to a 219.5 to tie with Allison Rae Thorson and Surprizedya (Gunnatrashya x Dun With Surprises) for the win of the American Paint Horse Association Chrome Cash check.

The top 30 riders in the Non Pro Classic advance to the Finals on Friday, April 21, with the top 20 advancing in the Prime Time Non Pro division.

In order to advance in the L4, riders needed a score of 217.5 or higher, which is 2.5 points higher than the 2022 bubble. 



Kelsey Price Claimes Novice Horse Non Pro Championship on In My Glory Days

With only one show under her belt following having her son, Kelsey Price took on the NRBC Non Pro Classic like a pro.

She and 2019 mare In My Glory Days, bred by Stephanie Gripp, earned more than \$8,000 for the Novice Horse Non Pro championship. It's been a barn family affair with the mare since the beginning.

"Our assistant, Dane, started her and she's been in our program from the beginning,

Price said. "I was pregnant last year so our assistant, Luca Cozzo, rode her in the futurities and made the lower level finals at the [National Reining Horse Association] Futurity. I got to take over the reins this year."

The pair got started at the Oklahoma Reining Horse Association spring show, where they finished reserve. Coming into the NRBC, Price was aware it was the largest Non Pro Classic ever fielded, but tried to keep herself focused.


"She was really good in the prelims for me here. Kole helped me a lot this horse show preparing her and she felt really ready," she said. "She is a lot of horse, and I'm not used to that horsepower. I know there is an opportunity to step up and mark a big score, she

has a lot of stop, a lot of turn. We slow our mind down a lot in training, and I have to slow myself down and plan my pattern out. I take one maneuver at a time."

The plan worked out, and Price is sitting in a golden seat headed to Friday's Finals. But, she's not resting on her success in the preliminary.

"I think the NRBC is the toughest Non Pro event of the year," Price said. "The age group from 4- to 7-years old is an incredibly tough group of horses. Taking a bubble score that high shows the high level of competition here. I believe it is like making the NRHA Futurity Finals when you make the Finals here—the crowd is electric for the Non Pro and the horses are fresh because it is the beginning of the year. It is tough!"

Earning the Novice Horse Non Pro title is a boost in confidence. Price appreciates the chance to earn another check on her younger Derby-aged mount.

"The Novice Horse here is a great opportunity for these horses," she said. "It is really hard to show a 4-year-old to go against a 6- or 7-year-old stud, so having this Novice Horse to get these younger horses recognized, it's great." 


Hygain Welcome Party Draws Large Crowd

Last night, NRBC Sponsor Hygain hosted a festive and popular welcome party.

Hygain representatives David Snodgrass and Lexi Hernandez were on hand to welcome everyone, pass out Hygain swag, and answer questions about the company.

Thank you to David, Lexi, and Hygain for sponsoring such a great event!

An additional thanks goes out to Tulsa Expo Square for being such incredible hosts.



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Tuesday Ancillary Winners Crowned in Super Duty Arenas

**Intermediate Open Champion
Limited Open Champion
Rookie Professional Champion
Liam Sykes & Hope N A Prayer**

In a year's worth of competition, a lot changed for Liam Sykes and the bay mare he showed, Hope N A Prayer. Both have competed for only a year, and both notched their first major reining victory at the National Reining Breeders Classic when the pair claimed the Intermediate Open, Limited Open and Rookie Pro divisions with a 145.5.

From Victoria, Australia, Sykes now lives in Pilot Point, Texas, where he works for Trent Harvey. His interest in reining brought the young man to the U.S.

"I worked for an all-around trainer [in Australia] that dabbled a little bit in the reining. Eventually, Trent Harvey, the guy I work for now, came over to do a clinic, had a position and that is how I wound up here," he said. "Starting in the all-around, I got an appreciation for pretty horses, pretty lopers and lead changers, but I like to go fast, too."

In 2022, Sykes' first reining event was the NRBC, and now, the 2023 event provided his first win aboard the Teddy and Summer Gerrald-owned 2014 mare, called "Hope," sired by Whizkey N Diamonds and out of The Love Bud. For the wins, the pair takes home more than \$1,500.

"She never got shown until last



year. The owners, Teddy and Summer, had her as a practice horse," he said. "She turned out to be a really good show mare. Circling has been hard to get her tuned up on, and today was the most solid she's felt. I love this show—I am coming back!" 🐎

**Prime Time Non Pro Co-Champion
Dana Pastorino & Hesa Rockin Whiz**

Dana Pastorino's "practice run" put her and Hesa Rockin Whiz at the top of the Limited Non Pro and Prime Time Non Pro classes, tying them for first place with a score of 72.5.

"Today I wanted to stay real

straight in the middle, work on my lead changes, and keep him going forward. I didn't really run that hard because I am hoping we make it back for the Derby so it was just a practice run and working on what I need to work on for the finals," Pastorino said.

Pastorino says Hesa Rockin Whiz (Topsail Whiz x A Bueno Poco Dun-it) is very honest and a very sweet horse. The 7-year-old gelding has earnings totaling \$29,391 and will be adding to that number after the NRBC.

"He just wants to be in your pocket all the time," Pastorino said. "He is the most honest no-nonsense

Awards Protocol for Super Duty Arenas

Awards for 1st and 2nd in each division will be presented in the arena following class. All other awards can be picked up at the Awards Office located next to the Mustang Arena.

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horse I've ever had."

Pastorino loves the NRBC being in Tulsa because of the space the facility provides and the RV spots that are available, since she lives in the RV while on the road away from her Half Moon Bay, California, home.

Pastorino thanks her trainers Fred and Dany Tremblay, as well as her husband for the support and for holding down the fort in California while she is here at the show. 🐎

Prime Time Non Pro Co-Champion Paul Queen & Outta Dough

The "ole man" came through for Paul Queen yet again, this time tying for the win in the Prime Time Non Pro at the NRBC. Queen, from Coppell, Texas, and Outta Dough (Gallo Del Cielo x Dough Olena), a 2005 stallion owned by Dorothy Queen, earned a 72.5 to tie.

"For an 18-year-old, a 72.5 isn't bad! Every time I show him is a highlight to me," Queen said of "Ben." "He will go drag his butt and that is fun about him. People laugh and ask if I brought the ole man, but he is my go-to. As long as he wants to do it, is sound, I'll bring him."

The NRBC holds a special place in Queen's heart. It was the first show that he competed on, and won on, Ben. To this day, he elects to compete at the event annually.

"A show I want to come and compete at is a show where the management pays attention to the non pros," he said. "The non pros are who make the pros. So many shows out there focus on the shows and the non pros are a second thought, but being interviewed and recognized like this, that makes the non pros feel wanted and that makes a huge differ-



ence at a show.”

In addition to showing Outta Dough, Queen is competing in the Non Pro Classic. His preliminary 218.5 score aboard Makendiamonds (Whiskey N Diamonds x Makeit N Tinseltown) will get him to the Friday finals. He credits a team with his reining success.

“Thanks to Jared Leclair, Mike Burg, Matt Armenta, Bob Curtis, Jack Kyle—he was a big influence of mine—and my mom, of course. She has been there forever,” he said. 

Limited Non Pro Co-Champion Ali Rope & Ruf Lil Sixty Six

Attending the NRBC for the first time is paying off for Ali Roper and Ruf Lil Sixty Six (Inferno Sixty Six x Dunit A Lil Ruf), also known as “Dean,” with a co-champion title in the Limited Non Pro class.

Roper watched her sister, Indy, compete for years in the reining and made the switch from jumping horses.

“I asked Indy if she needed extra help [because] I don’t mind exercising some,” Roper recalled. “Then I went to a couple of shows and I said, ‘well why not, let’s tag along.’”

Roper tied for first in the Limited Non Pro with a score of 72.5, and this is her fourth reining horse show ever.

“I usually get really nervous and anxious but today I just told myself just go in and have fun, no stress,” Roper said. “This was my first big time reining show, and I am just really excited.”

Indy encouraged her to step into the big league and show here at the NRBC.

“I really enjoy Holly, who works for us full time, and spending time with my dad and Indy and just mak-




Congratulations to Tuesday’s Reserve Champions!

Int. Open (1) Res. Champ - Gabe Hutchins & TR Silver Step
Ltd. Open (1) Co-Res. Champ - Dakota Guthridge & Dun With Guns
Rookie Pro (1) Res. Champ - Ryan Philip Clarke & Xtra Step N Diamonds

ing those memories,” Roper said. “We work hard but we have a lot of laughs.”

Roper adds Dean is really smooth, easy and a lot of fun to ride, although, after the NRBC she plans to get back on her jumping horses. Her favorite thing about the NRBC is getting to see people she has always watched on the screen, she

says. Roper enjoys how friendly and personable everyone is here at the show.

“I would love to thank my sister, Indy, for sharing her horses and my dad for supporting me,” she said. “Also, my family back home and my mom especially for watching my kids while I could be away for the week.” 

DON'T MISS THE MARKEL INSURANCE NON PRO DRAW PARTY



As one of the largest active corporate sponsors in the reining industry, Markel Insurance has a well-earned reputation for its support of organizations and events. Nowhere is that more evident than at the National Reining Breeders Classic.

Frank Costantini, Senior Director of Western Disciplines for Markel, has been dedicated to promoting reining – both through Markel and through his service and leadership in a multitude of reining industry organizations. He said, “Markel has been a long-time sponsor of the NRBC and the Non Pro Draw Party for many reasons. If the Open Riders are the heart of the reining horse, the Non Pros are its soul. That’s why we at Markel always felt the need to give recognition to all segments of the reining horse industry and through the encouragement of the Board of Directors of NRBC, we were able to channel our efforts to the Non Pro Draw Party.”

The annual Markel NRBC Non Pro Draw Party is one of the most-attended events of the annual show. The evening of fun, set for April 19 at 7pm, includes drinks, dinner and time to visit with friends, plus the draw for all Non Pro finals positions. The party will be held in the sponsor area in the Built Ford Tough exhibition hall for everyone to attend.

A highlight of the evening will be the announcement of the eighth annual Markel NRBC Commitment Award recipient. This honor is bestowed during the party and is always a surprise to the person chosen. The recipient is an individual who goes above and beyond in support of the NRBC, of the reining industry, and the reining family.

It is the thirteenth year for the NRBC Markel Non Pro Draw Party, but Markel has been involved as an NRBC sponsor for over 20 years. Costantini noted, “The NRBC/Markel Commitment Award came about as another really cool way of recognizing someone whose efforts might go unnoticed by their peers because of their behind-the-scenes contribution to both NRBC and the entire reining horse community. This award has been a complete surprise to many of the recipients and is a lot of fun to present on behalf of both organizations!”

Previous winners of the Markel Commitment award are Rita Reed-Harris, Shawn Stratman, Dave Silva, Ellen Cummins, Loren Booth, Ann Admonius and Robert Santagata.

NRBC Secretary-Treasurer Cheryl Cody said, “We are privileged to have Markel as part of the NRBC sponsor family. Frank and the Markel team members who will be on hand at the show are a great fit for the mission of the NRBC so the end result is that everyone gets to enjoy a night of fun.”

Markel offers an immense range of coverage and is the leader in the equine insurance industry. To learn more about Markel, visit HorseInsurance.com or see a representative at the NRBC – Costantini, Susan Costantini, Karen Shedlauskas and Chloe Lawrence.



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2023 NRBC Show Schedule



Tentative Schedule

**Built Ford Tough Livestock Complex at Expo Square • Tulsa, OK
April 16 - 23, 2023**

Tuesday, April 11 - Move In (not before noon)

Wednesday, April 12 - Monday, April 17 - Open Riding/Paid Warm-Ups

*Please Note: All Coliseum Paid Warm-Ups (Classic Horses have priority) run from Wed. - Sat.
If you are not a sponsor, please plan that your paid warm-up will take place on Wednesday, April 12.
Paid warm-ups must be requested. They are not automatic with entry.*

FORD TRUCK ARENA		SUPER DUTY INDOOR ARENA		SUPER DUTY COVERED ARENA	
SUNDAY - April 16					
9 am	Non Pro Classic Prelims (1st Section) \$20K Novice Horse Non Pro	8	8 am	Warm-Up Class [1] (limited entries)	4
6 pm	Sunday Service with Rusty & Katy McCormick <i>(Upstairs in the Ranger Arena)</i>				Paid Warm-Ups & Open Riding
MONDAY - April 17					
9 am	Non Pro Classic Prelims (2nd Section) \$20K Novice Horse Non Pro	8	8 am	Paid Warm-Ups	10 am
			8 am	Visit Tulsa Welcome Breakfast - Ford Exhibit Hall	Open Riding
TUESDAY - April 18					
9 am	Non Pro Classic Prelims (3rd Section) \$20K Novice Horse Non Pro	8	10 am	Int. Open [1]/Ltd. Open [1] Rookie Pro. [1]	8
7 pm	Hygain Welcome Party <i>Everyone is welcome to attend in the Ford Concourse</i>				8:30 am
					Limited Non Pro [1] Prime Time Non Pro [1] Warm-Up Class [2] (limited entries)
					5
WEDNESDAY - April 19					
8 am	Open Classic Prelims (1st Section) \$30K Novice Horse Open	6	8:30 am	Novice Horse Non Pro L1, L2 & L3 [1] AQHA Amateur/ AQHA Amateur Select [1] APHA Amateur [1]	4
7 pm	Markel Insurance Non Pro Draw Party <i>Everyone is welcome to attend in the Sponsor Area</i>				8 am
					Rookie L1 & L2 [1] Prime Time Rookie [1] Yellowstone Paramount Network Rookie Shootout Round 1 TRFAM Rookie Qualifier [1]
					8
THURSDAY - April 20					
8 am	Open Classic Prelims (2nd section) \$30K Novice Horse Open	6	7:30 am	Rookie L1 & L2 [2] Prime Time Rookie [2] Yellowstone Paramount Network Rookie Shootout Round 2 TRFAM Rookie Qualifier [2]	14
7 pm	Kid's Movie Night - All kids are invited Matt Mills Reining Horses Open Draw Party <i>Everyone is welcome to attend in the Sponsor Area</i>				7 am
7:30 pm					Limited Non Pro [2] Limited Open [2] Rookie Professional [2]
					6
					2
FRIDAY - April 21					
8 am	(Arena open for Classic Finalists until 6:30 am) Non Pro Classic Finals Levels 3, 2, 1 & Prime Time Non Pro Classic Finals Level 4 Leadline	12	8 am	Novice Horse Open L1, L2 & L3 [1] AQHA Jr & Sr Reining [1]/APHA Open [1]	13
5 pm	Yellowstone Paramount Network Rookie Shootout Finals	8			7 am
6 pm	NRBC Open Classic Challenge \$25K NRHA Open [1]	9			Warm-Up Class [4] (limited entries) 10 & Under Short Stirrup [1] Youth 13 & Under/Youth 14-18 [1] Unrestricted Youth/AQHA Youth 18 & Under [1]/APHA Youth [1]
					6
					A
					6
SATURDAY - April 22					
8 am	(Arena open for Classic Finalists until 6:30 am) Open Classic Finals Levels 3, 2, 1 & Prime Time	10	8 am	Non Pro [1] Int. Non Pro [1] Prime Time Non Pro [2] TRFAM Non Pro Qualifier [1]	6
4 pm	Deary Performance Horses Sponsor Reception <i>Sponsors only in the Sponsor Area</i>				8:30 am
5 pm	Open Classic Finals Level 4	10			Novice Horse Open L1, L2 & L3 [2] Green Reiner L1 & L2 [1]
					8
					RANGER ARENA
					9 am
					10 & Under Short Stirrups [2] Youth Classic Challenge 13 & Under Youth 13 & Under [2]/ Unrestricted Youth [3] AQHA Youth 13 & Under [2] APHA Youth 13 & Under [2]
					8
SUNDAY - April 23					
7 am	Sunday Service Non Pro Classic Challenge/\$5K Non Pro [2] Int. Non Pro [2], TRFAM Non Pro Qualifier [2]	10	8 am	Novice Horse Non Pro L1, L2 & L3 [2]/AQHA Amateur [2]/AQHA Amateur Select [2] APHA Amateur [2]	8
8 am	Open [2]/Int. Open [2]/AQHA Jr & Sr Reining [2] APHA Open [2]	13			9 am
					Youth Walk-Trot Reining Green Reiner L1 & L2 [2]
					6
					The NRBC is a Host Event for The Run For A Million!
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CLASSIC CONNECTIONS *BACK IN ACTION*

After a five-year hiatus from the world of reining, Javier Melo has exploded back onto the scene. His reining hobby took a backseat while beginning college in New York and starting a career, but now the Miami-based rider is once again in the saddle.

Two months ago, Melo visited his “second parents,” Mark and Shannon Rafacz, and he jokingly told them to save him one of the “good ones.” Not thinking anything else of the comment, his parents ended up surprising him with the palomino 5-year-old stallion, A Spook Is Shining (Smart Spook X Ebony Shines X Shining Spark).

“My dad is all about the pretty horses, I sent him a picture of him, and a few days later he calls me into his office with my mom, and she told me I had a horseshow in two weeks,” Melo said. “That was the Florida Classic.”

The new team marked a 215.5 at their debut.

“That was my first time in the pen, and it was my seventh ride on a horse in five years,” Melo said, laughing. “He is about as kind as they come, and is like a big gelding. He doesn’t know he is a stud.”


With four weekends to prepare for the National Reining Breeders Classic after the Florida Classic and one schooling show in Tampa, Florida, the plan was to figure out the best way for Melo to show how great the horse can be in the pen.

“A lot of it was getting him ready but also it was getting me ready and having some time since I didn’t know what to expect,” Melo said. “More than anything, I needed to learn my horse.”

The team is getting along well since in the preliminary round here at the NRBC, where they received a score of 218.5. Melo knew he wanted to show here as the NRBC is his favorite event of the year. Since the transition to Tulsa, it is still Melo’s favorite event, and he says the facility is better suited for a horseshow that has the number of entries the NRBC has.

Melo knew he would get back into reining one day, he just wasn’t sure exactly when.

“Like everything in life, it is all about timing,” Melo said.

The next shows for the team include TNRHA Spinning in the Rein, and then onto the National Reining Horse Association Derby in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. 





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**Prime Time Non Pro Co-Champion
Morris Kulmer &
NVR What A Lucky Joe**

NVR What A Lucky Joe (Lil Joe Cash x What A Lucky Hit) should be enjoying his retirement, but owner Morris Kulmer simply enjoys riding him too much. The 2014 gelding, called "Joey," has more than \$153,000 in earnings, and today at the NRBC he added another line to his resume, earning the co-champion spot in the Prime Time Non Pro with a 72.5.

"We were in northern Utah, in the snow, and I just couldn't leave him there for the winter," Kulmer said. "I asked my wife if I could take him to the show and she said, sure. He's a great little horse! He's my steady eddy and is just fun."

A solid horse, Kulmer says he is blessed to have Joey. At the NRBC, he overlapped his Derby entry and the Prime Time class, which also

shared the same pattern.

"I figured I'd go over and show Joey and knock the rust off [before my Derby run], because Joey is like my tranquilizer," said Kulmer. "He was good even though I didn't ask a whole lot of him. Joey went in there and did his thing."

With the horse in Tulsa, Kulmer said he'll probably enter the gelding in the Maturity class. For the win, Kulmer adds to his more than \$234,000 LTE. He recognizes God, his family and "so many people that make the horse business go" for their support.



"It's like a family! It's the only event you can be losing and people will be cheering for you," he said. "At my age, I'm glad to still be here."

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Wednesday, April 19

****Note Start Time Change in SD Covered****

7 p.m. – Market Insurance Non Pro Draw Party – Sponsor Area

Everyone is Invited!

Ford Truck Arena

8 a.m. – Open Classic Preliminaries (1st Section) – Pattern 6

Drag Every *SIXTH* Draw

30-minute lunch break following draw #42

15-minute extended drag following draw #96

Following the section, the Coliseum will be open to Thursday's Coliseum horses only for SIX hours. It will then be open to Classic horses only until Thursday at 6:30 a.m.

Super Duty Indoor Arena

8:30 a.m. – Nov. Horse Non Pro L3, L2, L1 – Pattern 4

Drag Every *EIGHTH* Draw

30-minute lunch break following draw #48

Awards for 1st & 2nd in Arena following class.

Super Duty Covered Arena

8 a.m. – Rookie L1, L2, Prime Time Rookie, Yellowstone Rookie Shootout – Pattern 8

30-minute lunch break following draw #48

15-minute extended drag following draw #80

Awards for 1st & 2nd in Arena following class.

Following the day's competition, the Super Duty Arenas will both close an hour prior to Thursday's competition.

Taking Donations to Rein In Cancer Silent Auction!

You can still donate to the Rein In Cancer Silent Auction, just bring your item to the Sponsor-Media Office next to the Horse Show Office.

We have already got some great items donated and are posting previews regularly. The auction is in full swing and will end at noon on Saturday.

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