

Fred Win Crowned 2017 USA Para Reining National Champion

Columbus, OH - For the first time, the OQHA All American Quarter Horse Congress hosted the USA Para Reining National Championships drawing riders who qualified from six states. Grade 4 rider Fred Win's smooth run on Smokin Lil Mercedes earned the highest score to clinch the championship.

Win has been an early and ardent supporter of para reining believing that sports and especially horsepower are positive equalizers that puts the focus squarely on ability while raising the competitive bar.

As a busy attorney in NJ, Win credits his reining family at Santahillranch.com for their ongoing support. "I can't thank my amazing coach Dean Brown enough, all the sponsors and especially, Bob and Arlene Santagata for letting me lease and show one of their best horses," he says.

Close on Win's heels, fellow Grade 4 rider Beth Kelley took the 2017 National Reserve Champion honors riding Czgunnacashbigchez owned by Mike Yaple.

Flying in from California in a wheelchair solo is not easy, but Kelley said her reunion catch riding the palomino made the trip memorable. "Soup gave me everything I asked for, what a special horse. Also, a tremendous thank you to his generous owner and to Jen and Tom Hoyt's for all their help and coaching."

Three grades were contested with Cullen Le Roy topping the Grade 3 division with a great run on his mare Smokin N Tinseltown. Cole Jacobs scored a close second with his horse, Pinstripe Benz, and Holly Jacobson on Ruf N Loaded owned by Cole Jacobs placed third.

Grade 2 rider Jennifer Flanagan from SC, worked with trainer Steve Kutie of Kutie Performance Horses in TX to prep her new mare, Smart Zone, for the event after showing at the Western Dressage World Show in OK just the week prior.

Kutie says he's impressed by the attitude among para reiners. "The riders and trainers I have had the chance to work with have a drive and determination not just to compete but to win. The focus is on talent and ability."

It has been a gratifying journey for USA Para Reining Chair Jennifer Hoyt to figure out how horses and riders can bring out the best in each other in the reining realm. The welcome reception from both show management and spectators is very encouraging.

Para is shorthand for parallel sport which aims to give a wide variety of athletes more opportunities for serious competition.

Hoyt also hopes to reach out specifically to American Vets. "I believe that para reining is a perfect fit for our disabled vets who want to experience the thrill of equestrian sport."

Alongside the AQHA's tradition of promoting inclusive sport, and the NRHA's early support, USA Para Reining's goal is to build awareness and develop the discipline for more riders to experience the adrenaline partnership in riding a reining horse at both national and eventually, FEI levels. For more info: usareining.us

Thank you to sponsors: Shine N Spook, Tinseltown Flash, Tiinseltown Fly Guy, Shawn Florida Reining Horses, Paisley and Hoss, A&S Trail Equipment and Services, Beamer Dealership, Marilyn and Ray Randall, NHRA and OQHA.





