

NRHA

FEBRUARY 2015

THE OFFICIAL  
PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL REINING  
HORSE ASSOCIATION  
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# REINER



2014 NRHA OPEN  
FUTURITY CO-CHAMPIONS

**Shawn Flarida &  
Shine N Spook  
Jordan Larson &  
ARC Gunnabeabigstar**





# It's A Tie!

PAST FUTURITY WINNERS FLARIDA, LARSON  
SHARE VICTORY AT 2014 NRHA FUTURITY.

BY GAVIN EHRINGER

AS BASEBALL SAGE YOGI BERRA FAMOUSLY SAID, "IT ain't over 'til it's over."

As the last six finalists of the 2014 National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) Open Futurity took their rides, a handful of people made their way to the exits. Doubtless they wanted to beat the post-event log jam in the parking lot. And you couldn't really blame them—it was hard not to think they'd already seen the winning run.

Earlier in the Saturday evening performance, held December 6, five-time Futurity winner and Five Million Dollar Rider Shawn Flarida had given a thrilling demonstration of why he is the winningest rider in NRHA history. Riding 23rd in the second section's field of 30 contestants, the Springfield, Ohio, NRHA Professional and the stallion, Shine N Spook (Smart Spook x Ebony Shines), snapped the crowd to attention with their galloping run down.

As the horse pulled up and dropped its haunches almost to the ground, a front shoe arched skyward, landing with a thud 30 feet ahead of where the horse came to a stop. Undeterred, Flarida continued through a performance that was fast, bold and awfully close to flawless. With a 224.5 point score, Flarida assumed a half-point lead over Gabriel Diano, a little known rider from South America who had shocked the competition by taking control of the scoreboard early in the evening. (More on Diano's amazing story later ....)

After the Kiser Dragmaster had combed the arena for the final six teams, a feeling that the air was leaking out of the balloon began setting in. The first two riders, NRHA Professionals Franco Bertolani of Aubrey, Texas, and Peter DeFreitas, Leland, North Carolina, both failed to come close to Flarida's final's-leading score. Two-time Futurity winner and NRHA Three Million Dollar Rider Andrea Fappani, Scottsdale, Arizona,

wrangled a better trip on the mare Whizzen For Chex (Topsail Whiz x Dun It For Chex) owned by his employer, and Million Dollar Owner Rancho Oso Rio. And yet at no time during the ride did the knowledgeable crowd raise the roof, as it had during Flarida's effort on Shine N Spook. In the end, their 222 points were too little.

Similarly, last year's Futurity winner, Jason Vanlandingham, Whitesboro, Texas, made a stellar effort aboard the stallion AR Guns N Roses (Gunner x Miss Poco Whizard) for owner Andre Lauzon. But with 222.5 points, they too failed to push Flarida's name down the leaderboard. And Three Million Dollar Rider Craig Schmursal, Scottsdale, Arizona, squandered his lead-taking opportunity with a 220-point score on his third-and-final horse, the stallion Top Shine Whiz (Topsail Whiz x Sheza Shiny Chic) owned by KC Performance Horses, LLC.

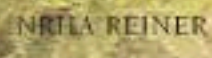
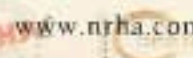
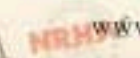
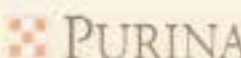
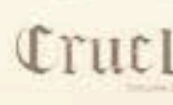
That left only Jordan Larson, Whitesboro, Texas. Many people in the Jim Norrick Arena held out hope for the 2010







## HORSE ASSOCIATION





# 2014 NRHA FUTURITY

& ADEQUAN NORTH AMERICAN AFFILIATE CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW



Shawn Florida and  
Shine N Spook



NRHA Futurity winner and Million Dollar Rider, but Larson was not among them. He'd been up all night preparing his three horses for that day's finals. Just after dawn, he and his wife, Taylor, went to breakfast. But something did not sit well in Jordan's stomach, and by mid-day he was sick as could be.

Adding to his wretched day was the fact that one of his horses, ARC Gunnabeabigstar, had been struggling with pneumonia throughout the 10-day long competition. Despite



heavy dosing with antibiotics and a thumb's up from the veterinarian who examined him, the stallion still had some fluid in the lungs that, Larson felt, would prevent him from showing at his best.

As fate would have it, ARC Gunnabeabigstar turned out to be the last horse of the evening. Normally, riders relish the chance to ride late because they've had the opportunity to eye the competition.

But for Larson, lightheaded from not having eaten since breakfast and still sick in the intervals between his rides, the anticipation and excitement were not there. He really just wanted to get it over with.



But as one of reining's best showmen, Larson rose to the occasion and showed no signs of weakness in the arena. ARC Gunnabeabigstar charged on his opening rundown and did not lose energy throughout the entire performance. As the crowd grew louder, their support for the duo building, you could only feel sorry for the people who'd made the decision to leave early. Yogi Berra, indeed, was right—it ain't over 'til it's over.

As Jordan and ARC Gunnabeabigstar ex-

ited the arena, the announcer paused dramatically before bel-  
lowing out the score: 224.5 points. Larson and Florida had tied for the lead!

But the unusual circumstance put Larson in a scenario which he dreaded: the prospect of a ride-off for the NRHA Futurity Lucas Oil Level 4 Open championship. Larson knew there was no way he could ask the wrung-out horse to go back into the arena and he was none too keen on a second effort either.

Fortunately, Florida likewise didn't relish the idea of taking his young horse back for another pattern. So, the men mutually agreed to share the 2014 Futurity



Jordan Larson and ARC Gunnabeabigstar

*© J. Hamberry*

WALTENBERRY



# 2014 NRHA FUTURITY

& ADEQUAN NORTH AMERICAN AFFILIATE CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW



Gabriel Diano and Wimpy Chic

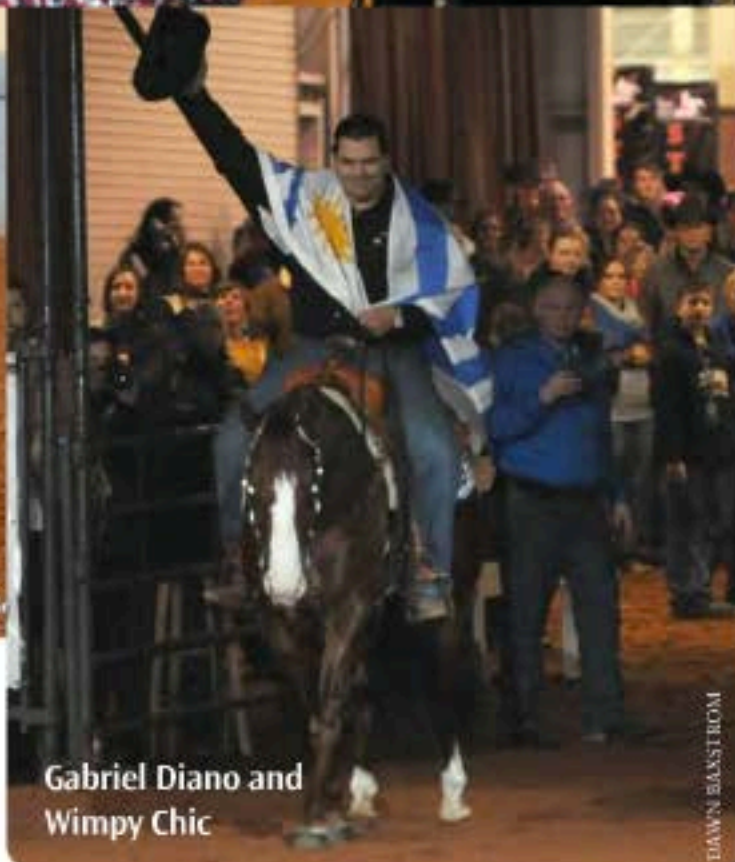
Lucas Oil Level 4 Open title as Co-Champions.

"I thought it was an awesome outcome," said Flarida following the announcement of the riders' split decision. "Jordan is one of the best in this business and a great friend."

"I'm exhausted," said a pale but happy Larson. "I was shocked when I heard our score. It seems like I never do well when I plan on doing well, and I get an outcome like this when I am least prepared for it."



Gabriel Diano being congratulated by his family.



Gabriel Diano and Wimpy Chic

As Kristin Killion Williams sang the victory song "Run For the Roses," and petals fell from the rafters, both Flarida and Larson got to perform side-by-side victory slides and spins. Flarida was joined in the arena by Shine N Spook's owner, Rick Clark of Clark Reining Horses LLC, Catlettsburg, Kentucky. It was a long-deserved and welcomed moment of glory for Clark, a perennial finals contending owner who'd been busting his tail all week getting ready to take over the NRHA Presidency.

Almost a year to the day, Clark had bought the stallion from Rosanne Sternberg, the English breeder whose horses have won more than \$1 million in the NRHA. Clark wanted a horse that suited Flarida and it's no surprise they both fell for Shine N Spook. His dam, Ebony Shines, had also foaled Shine



## NRHA Million Dollar Rider

Cody Sapergia was presented with his official NRHA Million Dollar Rider jacket, ring, and portrait.



## 2014 NRHA FUTURITY SIRE & DAM AWARDS

### LEVEL 4 OPEN DIVISION SIRE

SIRE	OWNER	AWARD	OFFSPRING
1.T. Gunnatrashya	Arcese Quarter Horses USA	\$11,488.32	ARC Gunnabeabigstar Co-Champion
1.T. Smart Spook	Rosanne Sternberg	\$11,488.32	Shine N Spook Co-Champion
3. Wimpys Little Step	Xtra Quarter Horses	\$5,744.16	Wimpy Chic 3rd Place

### LEVEL 3 OPEN DIVISION SIRE

SIRE	OWNER	AWARD	OFFSPRING
1. Wimpys Little Step	Xtra Quarter Horses	Sire & Dam Trophy	Wimpy Chic Champion





Casey Deary and  
ARC Gunna Sparkya

Chic Shine, who'd helped Florida claim the aggregate win in the preliminary rounds of the 2010 NRHA Futurity. So, it seemed a good bet that a half-brother might just put the two men over the top.

"I have tons of confidence in this horse" said Florida, an NRHA Hall of Fame inductee, at the evening's end. "Tonight,

I called on him really hard and he said, 'Hey, I've got this!'"

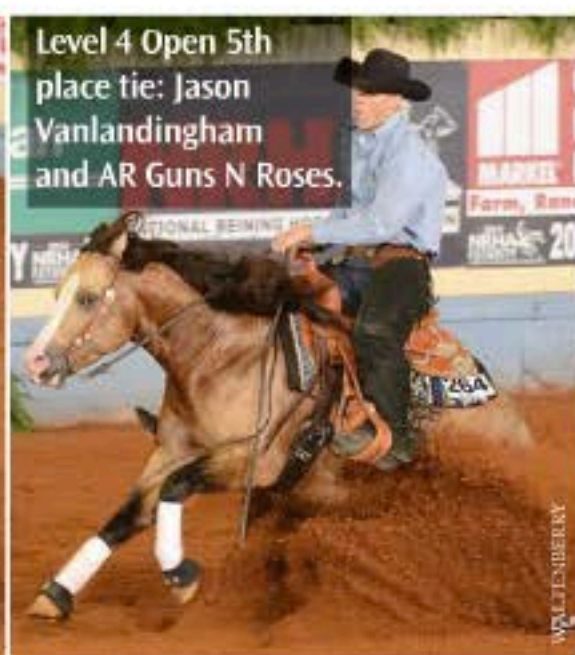
As for the Larsons, they will always remember the 2014 Futurity as a family affair. Adding to her husband's accolades, Taylor Larson captured wins in the Cinch NRHA Non Pro Futurity, claiming the L2 and L3 Non Pro titles on the couple's home-grown, Wimpys Dolled Up. And their son Cash, 6, got to take some spins in the arena with dad during the Open Futurity awards' presentation.

"We always said that it would be really great if we both won the Open and Non Pro Futurities in the same year. Although I didn't win the (Level 4) Non Pro, I did win the two lower-divisions. To us, it does feel like a dream come true," said Taylor.

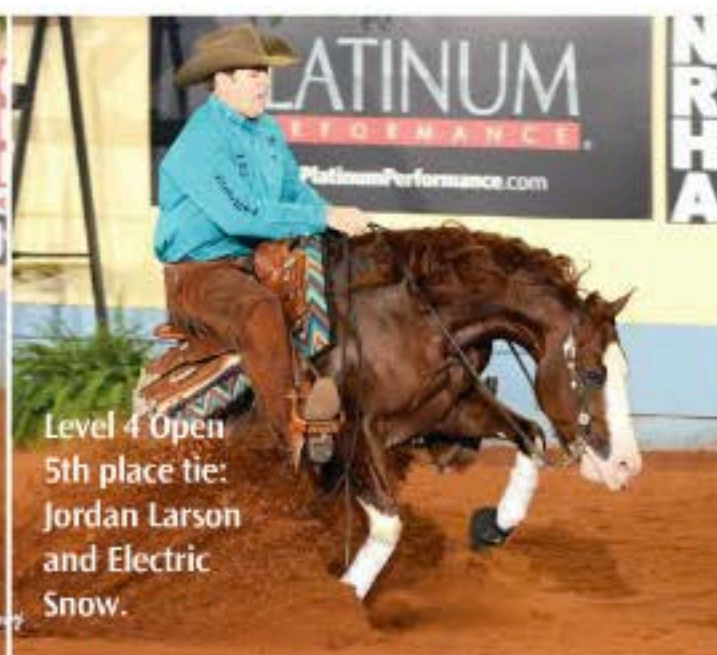
An even bigger dream-come-true was that of the Futurity's L4 Open Reserve Champion, Gabriel Diano of Minas, Uruguay, and his Brazilian wife, Maria. As a boy, he was encouraged to ride by his father, Jorge, and grandfather, Brigido, who shared the expense of buying Gabriel his first horse. He was also influenced by Janet Henderson, an expatriate who organized equestrian events in Uruguay. As a teen, Gabriel competed in



Level 4 Open 4th  
place: Casey Deary and  
ARC Gunna Sparkya.



Level 4 Open 5th  
place tie: Jason  
Vanlandingham  
and AR Guns N Roses.



Level 4 Open  
5th place tie:  
Jordan Larson  
and Electric  
Snow.



### WEG Team & Individual Medalist Recognition

Team and Individual Medalists at the 2014 Normandy Alltech® FEI World Equestrian Games were recognized at the NRHA Futurity for their achievement and dedication to the sport of Reining.







WALTENBERRY

Jesse Asmussen and  
Blue Berry Jac

In addition to Cade McCutcheon capturing the L4 Non Pro Reserve championship aboard Starbucks Finale (Smart Starbuck x Dun Its Deja Vu), the high school freshman from Aubrey, Texas, also topped the Non Pro Futurity go round aboard Golden Survivor (Topsail Whiz x Shining Survivor) with a score 217. Cade and Golden Survivor, aka Goldie, also earned the Youth Non Pro division championship, which is determined by the go round scores. All told McCutcheon and Goldie earned \$4,844.

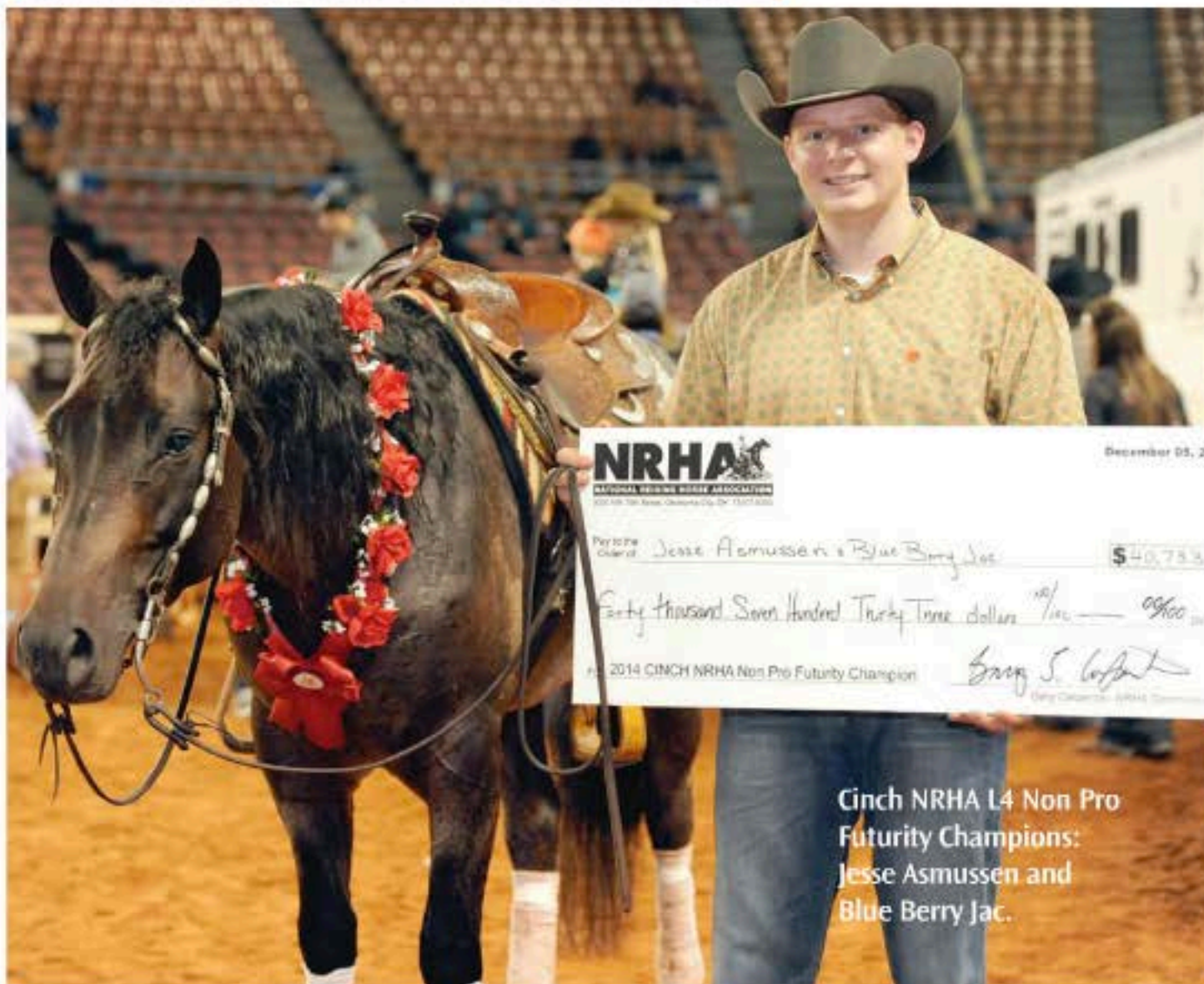
This marked the first year for the young reiner to qualify two horses for the L4 Non Pro finals and although he is proud of his accomplishments with both horses, his reserve championship mount, Starbucks Finale, holds a special place with Cade. "I started riding him myself in January of his 3-year-old year and trained him myself until about a month before the Futurity when my dad took over to help get him a little more broke and ready for the Futurity. I only started riding the mare (Golden Survivor) about a month ago," Cade said. "It was great to do so well with both horses, but it means a lot to me that I did well on the gelding because I've been riding him for so long already and did a lot of the work training him." Cade and the buckskin gelding known around the barn as 'Bucky,' earned \$29,122 for the reserve championship pushing Cade's NRHA Lifetime Earnings over \$108,000. Both

horses are owned by Cade's parents, Tom and Mandy McCutcheon.

Tying herself for the Youth Non Pro Reserve Co-Championship was Gina Maria of Switzerland on Shiney Bay Wave (Tidal Wave Jack x Shining Proof) and CS Eye Catchin Gun (My Royal Gun x Jessie Wright On). Gina Maria and her horses also competed in the L3 and L4 finals. She tied for ninth in Levels 3 and 4, respectively, on Shiney Bay Wave and tied for eleventh on CS Eye Catchin Gun. With combined paychecks from both her mounts, Gina Maria earned a total of \$21,122. Both horses are owned by her family's XCS Ranch, LLC.

### Levels 2 and 3

Taylor Larson was pretty proud of her mare, Wimpys Dolled



DAWN BAXSTROM

Cinch NRHA L4 Non Pro  
Futurity Champions:  
Jesse Asmussen and  
Blue Berry Jac.





WALTENBERRY

Up (Wimpys Little Step x Dolled Up Gunner), for their fourth place tie in the L4 Non Pro division finals, but her smile grew even bigger as they accepted the awards for the Levels 2 and 3 Non Pro championships. Making the event even more special for Larson, however, was watching her husband, Jordan, win the L4 Open co-championship the following night. "I've never done this well before so it is all kind of overwhelming and humbling at the same time. I am still just taking it all in," Larson said. "It has always been a dream of ours to win something together at the Futurity and we just feel so grateful for everything."

But the win for Larson came with some challenges as she battled to recover from a stomach bug she came down with

the night after showing in the non pro go round. "I don't know if I would have been able to show if I had gotten sick any other day," Larson said. "I still wasn't able to eat much by the time I showed in the finals, but I was feeling pretty good again, so I'm just so thankful for the timing of it all and that I had some time to recover."

In addition to being sick, Larson also had to fight back her nerves and remember to show the horse she had that day when it came time to show. "I didn't get warmed up very good. She was quiet, but then right before I was ready to go in I asked her to turn and it didn't go as well as I thought it should. Jordan just told me to shake it off, have fun and go show. He always says to take each maneuver one at a time so you are present and don't get ahead of yourself and end up over showing. My nerves get the best of me a lot so I really had to remind myself of that," Larson recalled. "I'm very strong with my faith in the Lord, so I sat there and prayed and just asked the Lord to help me be present. And then when I went in there to show she really stepped up and that's something that you can never predict."



Cinch NRHA L4 Non Pro Reserve Champion and Youth Non Pro Champion: Cade McCutcheon and Starbucks Finale.

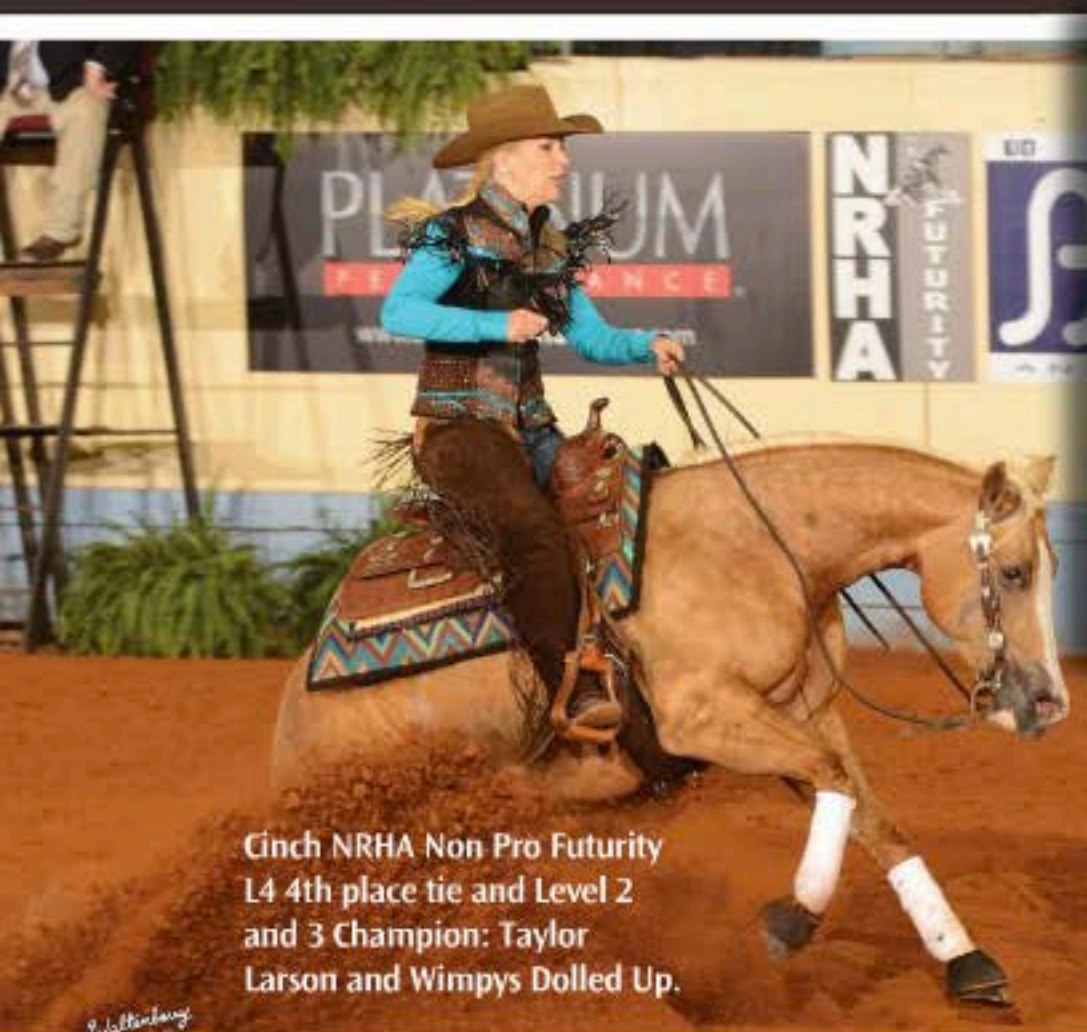


DAWN BAKSTROM



# 2014 NRHA FUTURITY

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Cinch NRHA Non Pro Futurity L4 4th place tie and Level 2 and 3 Champion: Taylor Larson and Wimpys Dolled Up.

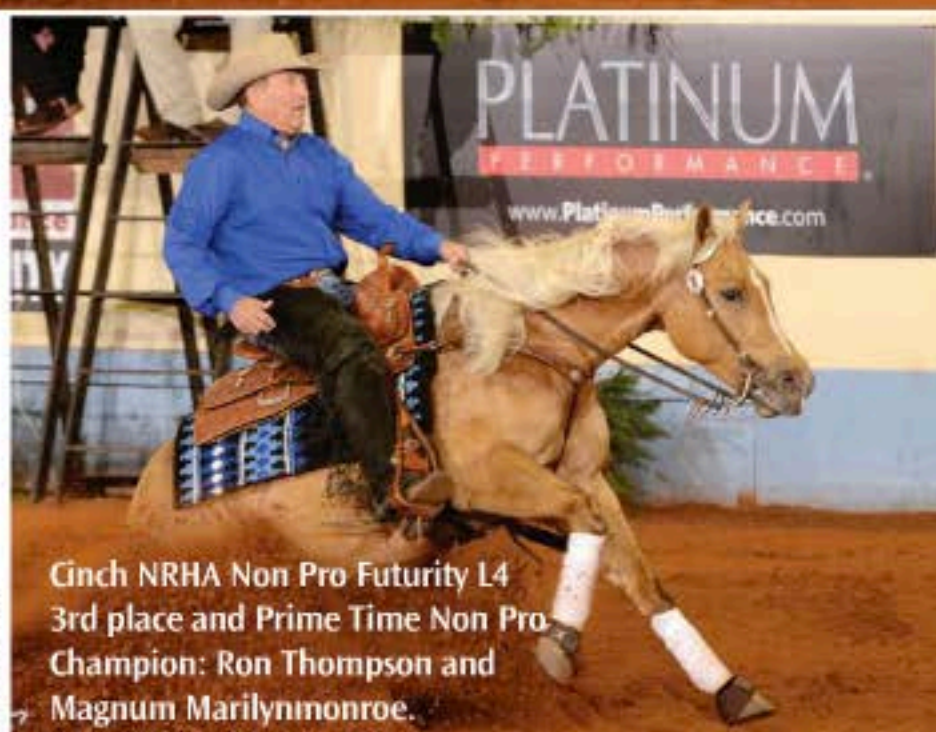


Wimpys Dolled Up, aka Peaches, is the first foal the Larsons bred and raised on their ranch in Whitesboro, Texas. In addition, Peaches is out of Larson's most prized mare Dolled Up Gunner who is a full sibling to the 2010 Alltech® FEI World Equestrian Games Gold Medalist, Gunners Special Nite. "We're just so excited because it's our first baby out of our favorite mare

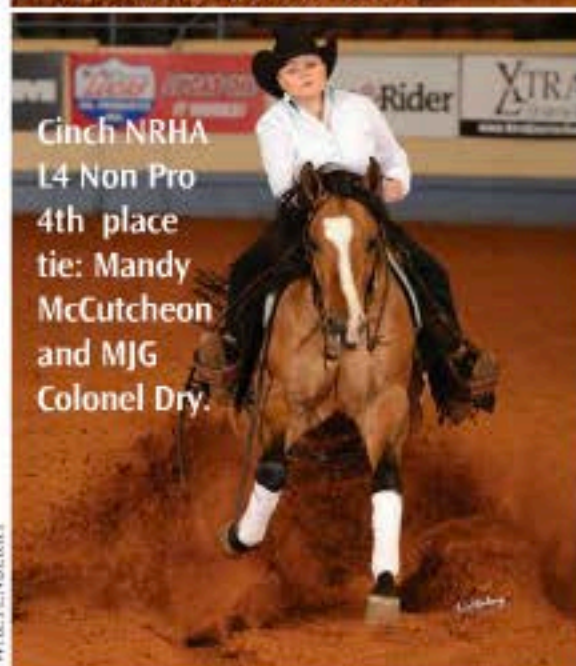
and now she has already won almost \$70,000. That's just a great way to start off our breeding program," Larson said. "She is such a sweet mare and has really proven herself as a show horse."

Larson, however, was quick to point out that she may have been the one in the saddle that day, but couldn't achieve anything without all of the help behind the scenes. "It always takes a village when you have little ones and you are trying to show. Haley Solum, who we call the show nanny, and my mother took care of the kiddos for me so I could focus. And then of course there's Jordan, who is my coach, my hubby, my mentor, my everything. And our entire crew that helps us; we are so blessed," Larson said. All total, Larson and Peaches earned a combined paycheck of \$54,872.

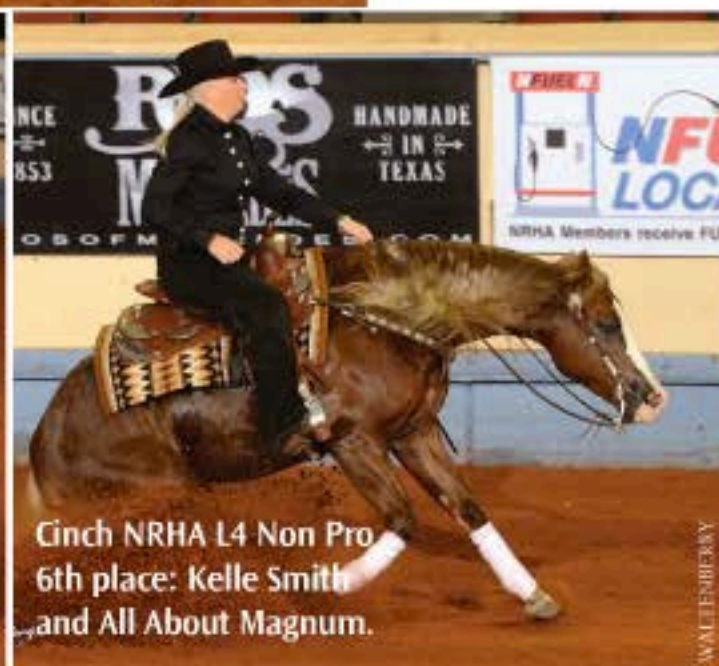
Capturing the Non Pro Futurity L3 Reserve championship was Christy Brasier of Montrose, Colorado, aboard her gelding Chics Want My Number (Wimpys Little Step x Dixie Chic Olena) with a score of 214.5. Brasier, who rides with trainer Cody Stark, also finished tied for seventh in the L4 Non Pro finals with 'Leroy,' earning a total of \$29,856. But that wasn't Brasier's only finalist, as she also placed seventh in the L3 and



Cinch NRHA Non Pro Futurity L4 3rd place and Prime Time Non Pro Champion: Ron Thompson and Magnum Marilynmonroe.



Cinch NRHA L4 Non Pro 4th place tie: Mandy McCutcheon and MJG Colonel Dry.



Cinch NRHA L4 Non Pro 6th place: Kelle Smith and All About Magnum.



Cinch NRHA Non Pro L4 7th place tie: Sarah Locker and Heavy Duty Chex.