



NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

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By Mary Crawford, NCTA News

Stock horse riders compete virtually

CURTIS, Neb. – When a collegiate team is unable to go to their first horse show of the season, they take an alternate course.

Travel to a show in Douglas, Wyoming, wasn't in the plans so the NCTA Aggies from Curtis did the next best thing. They went virtual.



NCTA sophomore Addison Villwok, of Randolph, guides her horse Baxter through obstacles in the Ranch Trail Course at a recent stock horse versatility show. (Kelly Bennett photo for NCTA)

Cameras were rolling at the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture as students filmed each other in stock horse team events for the Wyoming-based college contest.

Four primary skills judged in stock horse are ranch pleasure, ranch trail (with obstacles and skills needed at the ranch), reining and cow work in separating out one cow from the herd.

“In September, we tried something brand new and entered a show with CoWN-SH virtually,” said Joanna Hergenreder, Aggie Ranch Horse Team coach. “It was a unique experience and a great way to warm up for the next show with a few strong wins!”

The live show was sponsored by the Colorado-Wyoming-Nebraska (CoWN) Stock Horse Association in Douglas.

However, since some teams were not traveling due to the coronavirus pandemics, show organizers arranged for recorded submissions. Each entry was scored by two judges.

“The students put in a lot of work to produce their entries for this virtual show,” Hergenreder said.

NCTA sophomore Addison Villwok, a native of Randolph, Nebraska, led the Aggie contingent by winning the Collegiate Limited Non Pro All-Around champion title.

Villwok and her horse Baxter, whose registered name is Watch Me Fool Them, were first in ranch pleasure and ranch trail, and fifth in reining.

“I had never competed in a horse show virtually, and I believe this was a first for our whole team,” said Villwok, the team’s vice president.

“It was such an amazing experience which showed our team’s determination to show our horses whether it was in Douglas, or in our home arena. We made the best with what we had.”

Technology enabled the unique competition, even without benefit of an audience in the stands of the NCTA indoor arena.

“For me, it wasn’t challenging at all to get into the right mindset. In practice, I strive to ride how I would at a show.”

Coach Hergenreder made it an enjoyable experience Villwok added.

“We were having a great time showing what we have been working hard on this semester,” Villwok said.

Other Aggie placings:

Connor Crumbliss, Fairfield, and mare Packin’, was fifth in the Collegiate Limited Non Pro All Around, 2nd in reining, 5th in ranch pleasure and trail.

Colten Harris, Gates, and his gelding Rooster was sixth Collegiate Limited Non Pro All-Around; 3rd in ranch pleasure, 6th in ranch trail and reining.

Cauy Bennett, Elwood, riding Katy Sugar Lena, was Reserve Champion Collegiate Non Pro All-Around, placing second in all four classes.

Ayden Long, Lebanon, Kansas, and his mare Peptos Seven Six, third Collegiate Non Pro All-Around, 3rd in ranch trail and reining, 4th in ranch pleasure.

Macy Zentner, Cedar Rapids on gelding Blue, was third in Collegiate Novice All-Around, with 1st in ranch trail, 4th in both reining and ranch pleasure.

Jessica Burghardt, Fedora, S.D., and her gelding Rem, were fourth in Collegiate Novice All-Around, with 3rd ranch pleasure and reining, and 4th in ranch trail.

“We were so very thankful to have an opportunity to show even if we couldn't travel to Douglas in person,” Hergenreder said. “It was just as challenging to record a run and submit that for competition.”

A second virtual show is possible, Hergenreder said. And, if students stay healthy and out-of-state travel is approved, the Aggies may be able to compete Nov. 6-8 at Torrington, Wyoming where Northeastern Junior College (Colorado) Ranch Horse Versatility Team hosts their Fall Showdown.

Part of the University of Nebraska system, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is a two-year institution with a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology and related industries. NCTA is known for its affordable tuition, high job-placement rate for its graduates, and for the success of student teams in competitive activities including crops judging, ranch horse events, livestock judging, shotgun sports, stock dog trials, and intercollegiate rodeo. The college is consistently ranked as one of the best two-year schools in the nation.

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