

Chris Cox Wins 2007 Road to the Horse

The crowd and judges were pleased when the notable clinician took the championship.

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Chris Cox was named champion of the 2007 "Road to the Horse" March 4 at Murfreesboro's Tennessee Miller Coliseum. With Cox's win, \$15,000 will be donated to the national chapter of the Future Farmers of America and Cox will head home with a memorial saddle, buckle and model of his winning horse, Commander Otoe King, a 2004 sorrel American Quarter Horse by Paseo Pronto out of Otoe Windy Commander.

As Rick Lamb said at the end of the event—"It's now one for the history books. The judges' vote and the crowd vote went to Chris Cox."

Chris Cox started the 2007 "Road to the Horse" with a goal to win, but also to educate the crowds. "It's a great event and I'm privileged to be here," Cox says. "The crowd was into it. It feels good. When I picked the horse and went in there, I was the last person to catch my horse. It's constant work. I had to stick with it. I came here with the same plan I always use to work with a horse and I stuck with it."

At the end of the event that horse, number one in the remuda, locked onto Chris and followed him around in circles, then out of the wide-open arena.

"I'm patient," Cox says. "He came around. There has to be a trust built there for that to happen."

Fans and judges seemed to agree on the winner—but the competition was fierce. At the end of day one, all the clinicians had progressed with their horses and all had the opportunity to win.

"I was absolutely thrilled with the entire competition," says judge Mike Kevil. "Chris did a great job. I've never seen Chris work before and I enjoyed watching him. Chris made a lot of good decisions. He was smooth in applying his methods; he didn't get hurried. He let his horse relax before he went to work again. It's the demeanor of his horse we were watching most. He had a great, willing attitude. When Chris asked that horse to lope off, he loped off and loped until Chris asked him to slow down. When he did walk, he walked with his head down and was relaxed—he wasn't still excited from running."

"I came here to see what all the hoopla was about," alternate judge Lindy Burch says. "I had heard a lot about it, but wanted to see. This event is a great education. It really fills a niche that people need—teaching them about what can be done with horses. I think it fills a real need for the public—people who are interested in their horses' welfare. As a professional horse trainer and competitor—my horses aren't pasture pets—they can do a job. I appreciate a horse that can do a job, a horse that you can saddle up and go out for the day. I saw that take shape in the round pen."