

2007 Snaffle Bit Futurity Begins September 23

The National Reined Cow Horse Association Snaffle Bit Futurity celebrates its 38th anniversary this year with over \$1.2 million in payouts.

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The excitement of the 2007 NRCHA Snaffle Bit Futurity, which takes place at the Reno Livestock Events Center, begins Sept. 23 and runs through Oct. 7. Along with the Futurity competition, a full slate of horse show classes, the exciting NRCHA Futurity Sales and annual NRCHA banquet are scheduled.

According to the NRCHA, the Snaffle Bit Futurity provides financial incentives for trainers to keep their young horses in the snaffle rather than rushing them into the hackamore and bridle training stages that follow.

The first contest, known then as the Snaffle Bit Futurity, was held in 1970 at the Cal Expo fairgrounds in Sacramento; 27 horses competed. Since then, the Futurity has grown into a world championship event offering hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash and prizes, and attracting contestants and spectators from around the globe.

The contest is open to 3-year-old horses of any breed. To test the young horses' cow-working abilities, the Futurity consists of three events: herd work, rein work and cow work.

In the herd work, the horse must cut one steer from a small herd of cattle and keep it from returning to the herd.

In the rein work, the horse maneuvers through a pattern of figure eights's, straight runs, lead changes, sliding stops and 360-degree spins.

In the cow work--the most challenging of all--the horse must control the movements of a single steer at a dead run, heading it off and turning it both ways along the fence, then bringing it into the center of the arena to circle it once in each direction.

A horse's total scores in each of the three events are added together to form an overall combined score.

Preliminary go-rounds determine the finalists, who then compete again in each of the three events to determine the ultimate winners. "Finals weekend" has become so popular that the Futurity boasts a standing-room-only crowd of thousands.

But if you can't catch the excitement in person, get all the action on your computer. The NRCHA official videographer, Galloping Video, will be providing a free live video feed throughout the event. The show can be accessed through the NRCHA website, www.nrcha.com or directly from the Galloping Video website, www.gallopingvideo.com beginning at 8 a.m. daily (PST).