

Joe Wolter and Little Playgun take the first two events

AQHA versatility ranch horse competition up and running

by Ty Wyant

Joe Wolter, trainer at the historic 6666 Ranch, and Little Playgun scored “fitting” wins at the first two AQHA-sanctioned versatility ranch horse competitions. They were held during the Southwestern Exposition Livestock Show in Ft. Worth and the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

Joe Wolter, riding Little Playgun, accepts the trophy and congratulations from AQHA president J.D. Blondin after their win in the first AQHA-approved versatility ranch horse competition in Ft. Worth. PHOTO COURTESY OF AQHA.

The two wins were fitting because of the long relationship between the 6666s and the AQHA. In the early 1940s, the 6666 Ranch—under the stewardship of “Miss Anne” Tandy (then Anne Hall)—was instrumental in the founding of the AQHA. In 1940, the principals involved with starting the AQHA met in her Ft. Worth living room. The first AQHA organizational meeting was held the next day and officers were elected. Her husband, Jim Hall, was the first AQHA inspector.

With the AQHA now promoting a competition dedicated to the versatility of the working ranch horse, it has significant historical relevance that the 6666s won the first two competitions and those two competitions were held in conjunction with traditional western livestock shows.

The versatility ranch horse competition is divided into five classes—ranch conformation, ranch cutting, ranch riding, ranch trail, and working ranch horse. (For further information on each of these classes refer to the series of articles currently running in *RIDE*.) Competitors must compete in each of these classes on the same horse. Points (not official AQHA points) are awarded to the top finishers in each class. Those points are totaled at the end

of the competition to determine the overall placings. Those overall placings determine which horses earn AQHA points.

Little Playgun is two-for-two after the first two competitions,

“I figure if I go to the first few (versatility ranch horse competitions), I might slip past them,” a self-effacing Wolter said in Denver. “I don’t want to wait a few years, because they might just catch up.”

As long as Wolter is throwing a leg over Little Playgun in these competitions, they will be a pair to be dealt with, regardless of the competition.

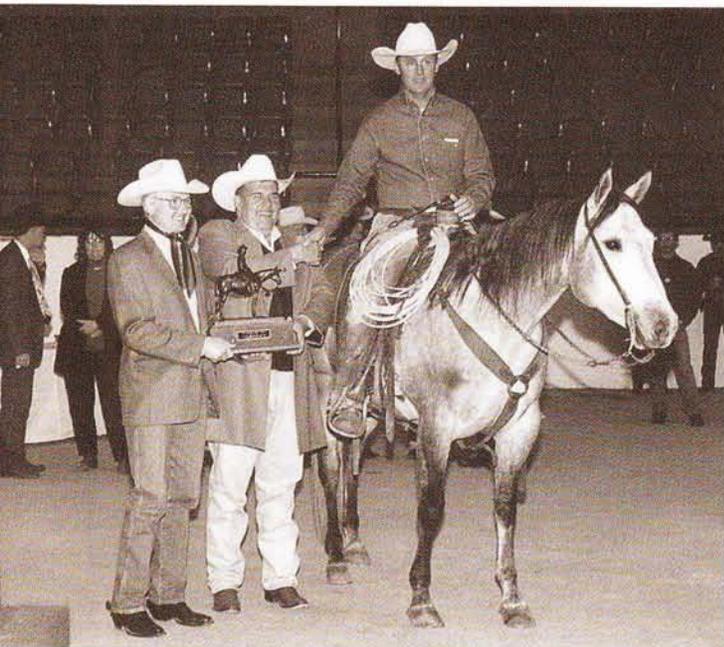
Little Playgun may prove to be the prototypical horse for horsemen wishing to compete in this new event. She has a cutting/cow horse pedigree (see following page) and the mindset to deal with an array of tasks. Plus, she has the conformation that leaves no doubt that she was meant to be a western performance horse.

Breeders and owners of horses that fit the above description should have a new market for their horses, especially older proven cow horses.

Little Playgun found an event that fit her style and disposition.

“I started her as a 2-year-old and she was a little touchy,” Wolter said. “She’s just been a good kinda mare. She’s the kind of mare that needs a lot of different things to do. She can get kinda bored with one thing. She’s better if you do a lot of different jobs. This deal here is right down her alley.”

The 5-year-old Little Playgun was pointed to the cutting pen as a 3-year-old and went to the NCHA Futurity with lackluster results. “I didn’t quite have her prepared and, like I said, she’s the kind of mare that needs other things to do.”



Like most participants at the first versatility ranch horse competitions, Wolter did not know what to expect.

"I don't have expectations. I kinda train the horse, and if it's good enough, that's good. I was sure blessed that I won. My mare did everything that I allowed her to do. She's trying to get better and then I get better," Wolter said.

In Ft. Worth, the versatility ranch horse competition had eight entries and then improved to 22 entries in Denver. There was a promising wide variety of competitors, including professional trainers, ranch hands and non-pro/amateur show horsemen.

All the competitors seemed to be caught up in a growing comradery that could blossom as this event expands.

Also, in Denver, there was a snowstorm on one weekday morning of the competition. The temperature was single-digit, some schools canceled classes and others were delayed, the icy roads were bumper-to-bumper with hundreds of accidents, and the ranch trail class started at 7 a.m.

This was far from the ideal situation to attract folks to a horse show. Yet, there were more people in the audience than I've seen at some world championship events.

LITTLE PLAYGUN

1st Ft. Worth, 1st National Western

Jewel's Leo Bars, by Sugar Bars
Freckles Playboy
Gay Jay, by Rey Jay

Playgun

Doc's Hickory, by Doc Bar
Miss Silver Pistol
Pistol Lady 2 Be,
by King's Pistol

Little Playgun, mare, 1997

Mr San Peppy, by Leo San
Peppy San Badger
Sugar Badger,
by Grey Badger III

Little Brim

Six Chick, by Triple Chick
Hat Brim
Blob's Lass, by Bob Jr

Note: This mare sports top-shelf cutting/cow horse/reining breeding. By Playgun, the sire of the 2001 NCHA Futurity and Snaffle Bit Futurity runners-up, and out of a Peppy San Badger daughter who has also produced an NRHA money earner. Second dam produced cutting money earners.

Versatility ranch horse pedigrees

If curiosity killed the cat—or at least took away one of nine lives—then curiosity also has put more than one pedigree wacko on life support.

Curiosity got the best of this reporter/wacko with the AQHA's versatility ranch horse competition.

What is the breeding of horses successful in this competition?

Let's find out.

After the first two competitions—in Ft. Worth and Denver—let's examine the pedigrees of the top five finishers at each competition.

These pedigrees offer a refreshing variety of influences. There is cutting breeding, reining breeding, cow horse breeding, thoroughbred breeding, and solid foundation breeding.

There is one very important constant—these pedigrees are full of proven, time-tested performance horses.

Perhaps these pedigrees are a reflection of the event. The event is not a specialized event. It is a combination of five classes that require a range of skills from the horse and rider. Likewise, these pedigrees have a wide range of horses that had a variety of



Joe Wolter and Little Playgun show their cutting skills at the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

TY WYANT PHOTO.

skills and sired/produced offspring with a variety of skills.

Pedigrees change with each new generation and these pedigrees may evolve as this event grows. It wouldn't be surprising to see more horses with a cow horse background point to this event. But, it appears—at this first glance—that this is an event for "doing" horses with "doing" pedigrees.

RIDE

BORREGOS DOUBLE

2nd Ft. Worth

Lightning Bar, by Three Bars tb
Doc Bar
Dandy Doll, by Texas Dandy

Docs Borrego

Poco Bueno, by King
Poco Pikaki
Spanishsprings Julia, by Tony

Borregos Double, gelding, 1984

Double Bid,
by Double Feature tb
Double Bid Man
Lady Beaver 65,
by Beaver Creek

Miss Double 127

Nifty Pep, by Pep Up
Miss Nifty 127
Pretty Lady 127, by Pretty Boy

Note: This 18-year-old gelding has breeding that reflects his age. He is by a son of Doc Bar, who is out of a Poco Bueno daughter. Racing breeding on the bottom side through Double Bid.

SIR SEVENTY FOUR

3rd Ft. Worth

Savannah Jr, by Everett Jr. tb
Sir Savannah
Last Bardial, by Johnny Dial

Sirs Sir

Taco Bar Lee, by Taco Bar
Glamour Bar
Joy Doll, by Red Max

Sir Seventy Four, gelding, 1997

Otoe, by Sugar Bars
Forko
Miss Bailey 1,
by **Joe Bailey's King**

MS FF Fork

Eddie Cinco, by Eddie
Miss Cinco 37
Miss Bailey 38,
by **Joe Bailey's King**

Note: Bred 4x4 to Joe Bailey's King.

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Versatility competition

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IMA EDDIE HANCOCK

4th Ft. Worth

Eddie 40, by **Eddie**
Eddie Eighty
Tootie Toot 71, by Buck Hancock
Hesa Eddie Hancock
Two Rocks Lad, by **Two Rocks**
Shesa Lady Rose
Shesa Eddie Rose,
by Eddie Red Rose

Ima Eddie Hancock, gelding, 1997

Edd's Blake, by **Eddie**
Edd's Black Gold
Daisy Gold, by **Blue Gold**
Ima Gold Rock
Two Rocks, by Double Devil
Im Classie Two
Bego Class, by **Blue Gold**

Note: Bred 3x4 to Two Rocks, 4x4 to Eddie and 4x4 to Blue Gold.

JOE DON HANCOCK

5th Ft. Worth

Lowry Boy 36,
by Roan Hancock
Hancock Duplicate
Seminole Lucy,
by **Blue Hancock**
Red Rooster Hancock
Seminole Charley,
by **Blue Hancock**
Hancock Amanda
Hancock Polly,
by **Lowry Boy 36**
Joe Don Hancock, stallion, 1998
Little Black Joe,
by **Joe Hancock**
Little Brown Joe
Rosa Hancock, by Chief
Hot Fudge Hancock
Geno Pole Cat, by Snap Cat
Josephine's Dusty
Nocona Josephine,
by **Little Black Joe**

Note: An abundance of Joe Hancock breeding. Bred 3x4 to Lowry Boy 36, 3x4 to Little Black Joe and 4x4 to Blue Hancock. These three linebred crosses are all to Hancock-bred stallions.

BH TINKER TOY

2nd National Western

Squaw Leo, by Squaw King
Be Aech Enterprise
Enterprise Lady,
by Poco Enterprise
BH Toy Boy
Roper's Jimmy, by Roper Boy II
Jimmys Valentine
Poco Matis, by Poco Bueno
BH Tinker Toy, mare, 1997
Peppys Humo, by Mr San Peppy
Tuff Humo
Tuff Bells,
by Tuff Joe Jet
Tinkys Tuffy
Chunn Deck, by Top Deck tb
Top Tinky Bars
Pixie Poo, by Tinky Poo

Note: BH Tinker Toy has earned \$17,129 in NRHA competition. By a son of the important reining horse sire Be Aech Enterprise.

FOX DUN GOOD

3rd National Western

Rapid Bar, by Three Bars tb
Silky Fox
Ima Pixie, by Custus Rastus tb
Heir To The Fox
Concho's Smoke,
by Gold Concho
Mai Tai Sue
Scotty Stripe, by Holy Toledo

Fox Dun Good, gelding, 1987

Hollywood Buck,
by Hollywood Gold
Hollywood Okie
Okie Paula, by Hank Paul
Pretty Hokey
Bar Flit's Pokey, by Bar Flit
Pokey's Lady Buck
Buck's Lady, by Pretty Buck

Note: In 1996 and 1997, Fox Dun Good finished in the top 10 among annual point earners in AQHA amateur working cow horse competition.

THREE JAY COLONEL

4th National Western

Jewel's Leo Bars, by Sugar Bars
Colonel Freckles
Christy Jay, by Rey Jay
Colonel Hotrodder
Doc's Hotrodder, by Doc Bar
Marys Hotrod
Miss Collegian, by King Billy
Three Jay Colonel, stallion, 1992
Magnolia Bar, by Three Bars tb
Magnolia Pay
Miss Pay Day B, by Pay Day
Cuatro Blanco
War Leo, by Leo's Question
War Leo's Lady
Brady Lady, by Cuellar

Note: By a stallion who has cutting breeding and out of mare whose family has produced earners in both NCHA and NRHA competition.

SLIK STORM

5th National Western

Doc O'Lena, by **Doc Bar**
Smart Little Lena
Smart Peppy, by Peppy San
Playboy Slik Lena
Freckles Playboy,
by Jewel's Leo Bars
Playboys Slik Chick
Doc's Slik Chick, by **Doc Bar**
Slik Storm, gelding, 1998
Jackstraw, by Silver Horde
Jackstraw Jr. tb
Sweet Treat, by Call Bell
Shine In Straw
Diamond Bar Dee,
by Sugar Bars
Gin Delight
Gin Pacific, by No Gin

Note: By a stallion who is bred 3x3 to Doc Bar. Has Sugar Bars on top (through Jewel's Leo Bars) and bottom.