



### **Non Pro Champions Crowned at NRBC**

Katy, Texas – Although not unprecedented, attaining back-to-back National Reining Breeders Classic championships on the same horse is exceptional. With the steady influx of high-caliber horses each year, competition is always formidable.

So it's easy to understand that Sarah Lynn Locker's 2016 victory on Friday evening is quite the feat. Last year, she and her horse, Heavy Duty Chex, won the title with a 220. This year they returned to the Great Southwest Equestrian Center to attempt another win.

Working as the second-to-last draw, Locker

and "Heavy D" laid down a picture-perfect run which resulted in a 225! "I don't think it's real," she said of winning the Championship. "I tell everyone that last year hasn't really sunk in so I don't know that this one will, either. It's such a cool feeling and this is one of the greatest horse shows you can go to, so to win it again – or even make the finals – is huge. To win it on the same horse is unreal."

So was she feeling any extra pressure as the reigning champion?

"My horse is definitely more broke this year, but there was a lot of pressure in the first go just to make the finals because he was so good last year. He was in the top five of the preliminary, which was so great," she said. "For him to come out and show like he did in the finals for me was just awesome!"

Heavy Duty Chex, by Nu Chex To Cash and out of Rondas Tio, is only five years old, so he has one more year of NRBC eligibility. "We are definitely going to keep him. Since he won this show he's close or just over \$100,000 in earnings. We are going to keep him and hopefully stand him as a stallion. We also still own his sire and dam – they're both home at Hilldale Farm," Locker explained. "It's pretty special to raise one and bring him along this far in his show career."

"I thank Pastor Mike Seay, Ed Harrison, my sister Jessicah Keller and my brother David Hutton, and of course my mom. She's home because we can't all be away at the same time, but she's the reason I can do what I do." She added, "Thank you also to Casey Deary and the whole Deary crew. They're all wonderful and Casey has always been so dedicated to helping me."

During the awards ceremony, Locker was presented with a check for \$30,000, a year's use of a three-horse trailer from Twin Cities Featherlite/Twin Cities South, a saddle from Continental Saddlery, a Gist Silversmiths buckle, a pair of Rios of Mercedes boots, a Whisper Bit, a saddle blanket from Yucca Flats, gift certificates to Santa Cruz Biotechnology and Thomas Moore Feed, and the signature blue-crystal trophy.

### ***Level 3 and Prime Time Champion***

Rick Christen has a lot to celebrate. Not only is he recently engaged to fellow Non Pro competitor Brenda Joyce, he also won the Non Pro Level 3 and Prime Time Championship and the Non Pro Level 4 Reserve Championship!

He won the titles on MsDreamy, a surprising feat considering he's only owned the mare for four weeks! "I just bought her from Bob Shearer through Dan Huss's program. Today in the finals was the

second time I showed her,” he explained about the mare, by Magnum Chic Dream and out of A Gal With A Gun. “I just knew I needed to do my job, stay clean, and stay out of her way. We also had a bucket of luck!”

Christen is an NRBC veteran who’s been attending the event for 12 years. A few years ago he won the same pair of titles – the Level 3 and Prime Time – on his good mare Skeets Little Annie.

“I thank Dan Huss, Bob Shearer, and of course my fiancé Brenda Joyce,” he said.

All totaled, Christen pocketed \$28,759, and took home prizes which included three Gist Silversmiths buckles, a saddle from Bob’s Custom Saddles/Tamarack Ranch, gift certificates to Thomas Moore Feed and Santa Cruz Biotechnology, Whisper Bits, and signature blue crystal trophies.

Christen also won the American Paint Horse Association high scoring Gist Silversmiths buckle for both the Level 3 and Level 4. APHA Director of Business Development Kalyn Sanders was on-hand to present the buckles.

### ***Level 2 Champion***

It’s only Bailey Kolsun’s second year to show at the NRBC, but she finished as the Non Pro Level 2 Champion on Diamond Studded Guns. “It’s amazing. Seriously amazing!” she said following the awards ceremony where she collected \$8,684, a saddle from Bob’s Custom Saddles/Tamarack Ranch, a Gist Silversmith’s buckle, a Whisper Bit, gift certificates to both Thomas Moore Feed and Santa Cruz Biotechnologies, and signature NRBC trophies.

Although a slight turn penalty in the preliminary round likely stymied Kolsun’s chance to compete in the Level 4 finals, she noted that she couldn’t be more proud of her 4-year-old stallion, who is by Gunnatrashya out of Like To Flo. “He felt really good,” she said. The NRBC is Diamond Studded Guns’ second event ever. “We bought him in December at the futurity. He was a little green but is very talented, and he’s the sweetest thing in the world. I’m going to keep him, and come back and have more fun next year,” she said.

Kolsun, a native Canadian who now resides in Texas, has been showing reiners since she was ten years old. She now rides with Ruben Vandorp, whose advice for the finals was to “show smart and have fun!”

She added, “I thank my parents Darren and Kathy Kolsun and my brothers Ryan and Cade. I also thank Ruben and Melissa Vandorp.”

### ***Level 1 Champion***

Carlyle Salter claimed the Non Pro Level 1, and finished Reserve in the Level 2, and third in the Level 3 with a score of 217 on her horse Gotta Be A Gunner. She won \$8,684, as well as prizes that include a saddle from Bob’s Custom Saddle/Tamarack Ranch, a Whisper Bit, gift certificates to Thomas Moore Feed and Santa Cruz Biotechnologies, a Gist Silversmiths buckle, and numerous other prizes.

Having drawn up on Monday, the 16-year-old was worried she wouldn’t be able to make it to the facility to show because of the torrential rain and historic flooding. “I was staying at my cousin’s and all the roads were flooded around the house. We couldn’t leave because the police were blocking the road,” she recalled. “I called the show office and they said they’d work with me if I couldn’t get there that day, but luckily I was able to with the rain delay.”

At the time, Monday's run – a 215.5 - represented the highest score Salter had received in competition. "Then we were even better in the finals! I actually hadn't brought a shirt to match my pad for the finals because I didn't think I'd make it. Luckily Shannon Rafacz let me borrow one of hers," she explained.

Salter noted that her trainer, Jamie Bissell, was a huge help when it came to showing Gotta Be A Gunner, by Colonels Smoking Gun out of Katie Chic Olena, at the NRBC. "He has been really pushing me past my limits, and he did such a great job getting me ready. I thank him and his wife Lisa. I also thank George and Lisa Aldridge from Webster, Florida, who taught me most everything I know about reining," she said. "I also thank Butch Hunsucker for giving me the opportunity to own this horse. He bred and raised him and we bought him at the futurity two years ago. I also thank Sam Schaffhauser, Yonathon Baruch, Ash Holbrook, and Shannon Rafacz."

Taylor Zimmerman won the Level 1 Reserve title on Wimpys Dolled Up, by Wimpys Little Step out of Dolled Up Gunner. The 5-year-old mare is owned by Vaughn Zimmerman.

Competition continues at the NRBC through Sunday, April 24. Complete details can be found at [NRBC.com](http://NRBC.com).