



For Immediate Release

Cowboy Mounted Shooters Target Special Abilities Riders at World Finals!

When you think of someone riding on the back of a horse at full speed brandishing a shining Colt revolver and shooting targets in an obstacle course, you don't think of special needs equestrians. However, last week, the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association invited two Therapeutic Riding centers to join forces with each of the World finalists and participate in the first ever Therapeutic Riding shootout. Eleven Cowboys and Cowgirls from Horses Help and The Therapy Zone Therapeutic Riding Centers were led through an obstacle course using a dowel stick with a sharp point in an attempt to pop balloon targets. Each rider was rated on accuracy in the shortest amount of time. Both centers were awarded \$500.00 and all participants received some very special gifts donated by Wahl and Silver Lining Herbal Supplements.

Our riders got to meet and spend time with World Class riders and their special horses. In particular, "Nevada Joe!" Nevada Joe is a wild mustang adopted from the Federal Bureau of Land Management in 1995 as part of the Wild Horse Project. Wahl corporation brought Nevada Joe to its Equestrian Center and trained him to become a member of the equine society. Horse owners followed Joe's extraordinary progress for twelve consecutive months in 2002 in the pages of Horse Illustrated magazine. He truly is a special horse. Currently, Joe is at home in Darby, Montana at the "Shooting Star Ranch," which is owned by Diane and Ernie Purcelli. They travel with the CMSA and have trained Joe as a Therapeutic Riding horse for disabled riders.

This event was the brain child of Diane and Ernie Purcelli who are both North American Riding For the Handicapped, (NARHA), Instructors. They are two very special individuals who believe that there can be greater diversity in the types of equestrian events disabled riders can participate.

“I have never seen so many smiling faces,” stated Gregg Goodman Arizona Representative for NARHA. “I believe the Mounted Shooters had more fun than the kids. Even though they were leading Nevada Joe through the obstacle course, they had their game faces on.” Gary Hannah a world class shooter from Missouri was running so hard through the course he tripped and fell crossing the finish line. Gary and Collin Reed actually won the event with the fastest time and the most popped balloons. “Its hard not to fall in love with these special kids. Their attitude is unbelievable, they are so positive, and adventurous they give you a new perspective about life,” commented Jim Hanson another CMSA world title holder.

Without question, this special event will continue to grow at therapeutic riding centers everywhere. I believe that this will be a life’s lesson for our newly formed competitive teams, helping them to understand there are no limits to what they may achieve. We cannot thank the CMSA, Wahl Corporation and Silver Lining Herbal Supplements enough for allowing our special abilities riders to participate with some of the most wonderful horseman and horses in the nation.

