

## The Ride of His Life

Blain Peerson wins the \$50,000 Amateur class at the National Cutting Horse Association's Eastern National Championships.

There he was. Wearing his crisp, white shirt. Walking casually into the cutting pen on his favorite horse. Knowing it was the finals of the \$50,000 Amateur class at the NCHA Eastern National Championships. Realizing that something wonderful or terrible could happen during the next 2-and-a-half minutes. Knowing that cows aren't always predictable, and sometimes horses make mistakes. Feeling the pressure building in the Jackson, Mississippi, coliseum on that March 15 day. It seemed quiet. Real quiet. And then, it all just started working.

Blain Peerson, a longtime horseman and Seminole Feed dealer from Live Oak, Florida, was having the ride of his life.

"It was one of those runs where you dream about it, but you're not sure if you'll ever have one," Blain said. "Everything just worked, and my horse was great. It was a run that just kept building. The first cow was good, the second one got even better. I wasn't nervous the entire time. It seemed like every time I turned around, they were in the right position for me to be able to go in and cut them clean."

Photo by Don Shugart Photography

Blain's final cow, a black baldie, helped his horse put on a special show.

"It was so cool," he said. "There were probably 10 seconds on the clock and I was working the third cow, and it was getting better and better. I could tell my horse was starting to get tired, and my herd help kept screaming, 'Don't you dare stop riding!' I was so focused on keeping that ride going."

Then the buzzer went off, and Blain finally let down.

"The planets were aligned," he said. "You couldn't have asked for a better ride."

The judges agreed. Blain and his horse, Ladys Dual Peppy, marked a crowd-pleasing 219.5.

## The Long Wait

The only bad thing about marking a high score and taking the lead, Blain said, is that you have to wait until the rest of the class to know, for sure, that you won.

"I didn't even stay in the coliseum," Blain said. "I did a quick interview with the Quarter Horse News, and then I walked out. I wanted to take care of my horse, and I knew there was nothing left to do but wait and see how everybody else did. I took my time. I wanted everything to be done by the time I got there."

During the wait, Blain called home to share the news with his family who couldn't be there. Julie, his wife, is a veterinarian who had to return to her business earlier in the week. And their 13-year-old daughter, Tyler, had to get back to school.

"That's when it started upsetting me that they couldn't be there," Blain said. "I realized I was excited, but it was disappointing that they weren't there to celebrate with me."

In the end, Blain's score held, and he was named champion.

"I cannot give enough credit to my help, Ben Roberson, my trainer who was a herd-holder, Ted Solkel, my other herd-holder, and Billy Kidd and Gary Moore, my turnback help," Blaine said. "They helped me all week long. I was so excited to go out there with this horse because I knew he was so great, but the more we could show him, the more seasoned he would get."

Blain, a longtime horseman, emerged on the cutting scene in 2003, winning a remarkable fourth place in the \$2,000 Limited Rider class at the Eastern National Championships that show calendar year.

#### About the Horse

Blain has had his eyes on Ladys Dual Peppy, a 5-year-old sorrel Quarter Horse gelding, since early last summer.

"When I saw him, I knew he was a great horse," Blain explained. "He's not the kind of horse that makes you stop in your tracks when you see him just loping around. But once you see him in front of a cow, he's pretty dynamic. He's very eye-appealing in front of a cow. He works with his ears up and alert, and he reacts and reads a cow really well."

Blaie approached the owners of the horse, asking them if they'd consider selling.

They weren't.

But he kept pestering, and finally, last fall, the owners called up and said

they might be interested in selling. Blain rode him in December, worked a few cows, and knew he wanted him.

"We took him home that day," said Blain, who keeps his horses at the Peerson Family Farm in Live Oak.

From there, the story gets a little muddled. If you talk to Blain's wife Julie, she says Blain got the horse because that's all he wanted for Christmas last year.

If you talk to Blain, he says his wife was working so hard that she didn't have time to go Christmas shopping.

"Yeah, she was like, 'Here you go, buddy! Here's your horse! It's your Christmas present!'" he joked.

Either way, Ladys Dual Peppy, by Dual Peppy and out of the famous mare, Doc O Lady, came to live at the Peerson Family Farm in December. Tyler, who also rides cutters as a junior-youth, quickly gave the gelding "Jasper" as a barn name. The excitement kept building.

"I started showing him in January at the winter circuit, and we just clicked," Blain said. "He had not won any prize money at that time, and we've probably won \$8,000-\$10,000 already this year. It's been fun."

The Peerson family attends nearly all Florida Cutting Horse Association events, as well as Southeast Cutting Horse Association events in Geneva, Alabama. This fall, they plan to show at the Music City Futurity in Nashville.

"Blain really loves it," Julie said. "And he likes the cows. He's a competitive person. He is his own worst critic. Blain doesn't care as much about if he wins, but he wants to have a good ride."

"Even a bad day for this horse is not a bad day," Blain added. "I'll keep showing him and getting him seasoned, and we'll see what happens next."  
Nutrition at the Peerson Family Farm

Blain Peerson knows a little about nutrition. At Howland Feed Mill in Live Oak, Blaine constantly works on feed formulas for cattle and other livestock throughout the Southeast.

His own horses at the Peerson Family Farm thrive on Seminole Ultra Dynamix. This premium feed is complemented with Coastal hay.

"We've been feeding Ultra Dynamix for a long time," he said. "It's a feed that fits our entire program very well. We wanted something that was high in fat, especially for the amount of work our horses do. It's also great that I can feed it to young horses and older horses."