

Records fall at World Skijoring Championships at Whitefish Winter Carnival

WHITEFISH, MONT: A record field of 91 competing teams entertained a record number of spectators estimated at 3,000 revelers on Saturday alone, and came away with a total record purse of \$25,833.50 as the World Skijoring Championships preceded the Whitefish Winter Carnival's big parade weekend.

Often referred to as "Montana's Xtreme Winter Sport", the skijoring features teams of horse-mounted cowboys and skiers pulled by a rope through a course that includes big air and slalom gates. Some of the skiers use the the g-force of the rope to propel themselves to speeds approaching 50 miles an hour, and the crashes, while disappointing to the teams, can be spectacular.

The biggest money attracted Open Class competitors from over 1,000 miles away, with the team comprised of Helena, MT cowboy Joe Scanlon aboard his aptly-named horse Jet, and former U.S. Ski Team World Cup competitor Cody Smith of Spokane, WA, who pocketed purse money of \$4,779.90 between them, between their fast go day money and by winning the average and the World Championship trophy buckles.

Smith also teamed with Dana Stiles of Eagle, CO who performed some magic on Sunday on her horse Merlin, to take second in the combined 2-day event, which when combined with Sunday's 2nd fastest-go day money, paid the team \$2,593.36.

Smith was the biggest weekend winner overall, taking home \$4,111.63 in purse winnings himself, including winning the Murdoch's Long Jump on both Saturday and Sunday.

Third place overall in the Open was claimed by Kalispell cowgirl Jaimie Tripp riding her barrel-racing horse Playboy, pulling Tyler Smedsrud of Red Lodge, MT. Tripp & Smedsrud were leading the Open on Saturday with the fastest time of the day at 16.68 seconds, but with a significantly faster track on Sunday, Scanlon and Stiles recorded 15.3 and 15.57 second times respectively, to Tripp's 15.97 on the second day of competition. Still the top three teams all buried the speed record at the Whitefish Winter Carnival course, and the Tripp/Smedsrud team still walked off with \$2,491.64 for their combined weekend efforts.

The Sport Class was dominated by combo of Kalispell cowboy Jesse Johnston and Whitefish skier Mitch Eddy, as Johnston and Eddy combined to win with two fault-free runs, topped with a 16.3 second run on Sunday. Eddy was pulled by Whitefish cowboy Monte Sparby to second place overall, helped by a 16.73 second run on Sunday, while Johnston pulled Kalispell skier Ben Graham to third place on his horse Blue Rock.

Proving that anything can happen, Dale Duff pulled Ron Behrendt aboard Psycho Sadie, the fastest (and only) mule in the competition to a 12th place overall finish out of 44 teams in the Sport Class...beating 32 teams pulled by horses.

The Novice Class was dominated by skier Lance Nelson of Kalispell, who took first, second and third place behind three different horses and riders. Nelson rode behind Steve Armstrong, also of Kalispell and his horse Sonny, to winning the fast-go's both days, as well as the overall average, with that team pocketing \$765.12 for

their efforts. Kathy Hansen of Kalispell pulled Nelson behind her new horse Chief to second in the overall average, Barton Slaney pulled Nelson behind Scott Ping's horse Black to third, and Whitefish schoolteacher Eryn Calobee pulled Seattle, WA skier Kyle Entrop to fourth in the Novice aboard Gorgeous, a Texas-bred cutting horse owned by the Britz Ranch.

The Murdoch's Long Jump provided a solid exclamation point each day as cowboys pulled skiers to fly off the specially built jump for the longest distance. Defending Open Champion Tim Guest and his dun-colored rope horse Cougar pulled Cody Smith on a crack-the-whip flip off the specially-built jump to distances of 49.8' on Saturday and 52.1' on Sunday, while sticking the landing both days. The team won \$850 over the weekend for that effort alone.

Even though the weather and course conditions changed dramatically from Saturday's mild temps to Sunday morning's brisk above-zero breezy conditions, the course hardened up and the hardy Sunday spectators were treated to exceptional competition with solid course conditions, good footing and the fastest times ever recorded in Whitefish Winter Carnival skijoring competition.

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Full event results:

OPEN CLASS – 16 teams – total purse: \$10,170.00

Saturday 1st go-round results:

1st Place fast-go: 16.66 seconds - \$762.75/team

Jamie Tripp – Rider
Tyler Smedsrud – Skier
Playboy – Horse

2nd Place fast-go: 16.74 seconds - \$457.65/team

Joe Scanlon – Rider
Cody Smith – Skier
Jet- Horse

3rd Place fast-go: 16.87 seconds - \$305.10/team

Dana Stiles – Rider
Toby McIntosh – Skier
Merlin – Horse

Sunday 2nd go-round results:

1st Place fast-go: 15.3 seconds - \$762.75/team

Joe Scanlon – Rider
Cody Smith – Skier
Jet – Horse

2nd Place fast-go: 15.57 seconds - \$457.65/team

Dana Stiles – Rider
Cody Smith – Skier
Merlin – Horse

3rd Place fast-go: 15.97 seconds - \$305.10/team

Jamie Tripp – Rider

Tyler Smedsrud – Skier
Playboy – Horse

Open Class Combined – Final

1st Place – World Skijoring Open Champion – 32.04 seconds - \$3,559.50/team

Joe Scanlon – Rider
Cody Smith – Skier
Jet – Horse

2nd Place /Reserve Champion – 32.56 seconds - \$2,135.70/team

Dana Stiles – Rider
Cody Smith – Skier
Merlin – Horse

3rd Place – Open Class – 32.63 seconds - \$1,423.80/team

Jamie Tripp – Rider
Tyler Smedsrud – Skier
Playboy – Horse

Sport Class – 44 teams – Total Purse: \$5,950.00

Saturday 1st go-round results:

1st Place fast-go: 17.34 seconds - \$446.24/team

Jesse Johnston – Rider
Mitch Eddy – Skier
Blue Rock – Horse

2nd Place fast-go: 17.74 seconds - \$267.76/team

Roisin O'Neill – Rider
Jack Connors – Skier
Levi – Horse

3rd Place fast-go: 17.86 seconds - \$178.50/team

Jesse Johnston – Rider
Ben Graham – Skier
Blue Rock – Horse

Sunday 2nd go-round results:

1st Place fast-go: 16.3 seconds - \$446.24/team

Jesse Johnston – Rider
Mitch Eddy – Skier
Blue Rock – Horse

2nd Place fast-go: 16.73 seconds - \$267.76/team

Monte Sparby – Rider
Mitch Eddy – Skier
Tuff – Horse

3rd Place fast-go: 17.13 seconds - \$178.50/team

Jesse Johnston – Rider
Ben Graham – Skier
Blue Rock – Horse

Sport Class Combined – Final

1st Place – World Skijoring Sport Champion – 33.64 seconds - \$1,166.20/team

Jesse Johnston – Rider
Mitch Eddy – Skier
Blue Rock – Horse

2nd Place /Reserve Champion – 34.96 seconds - \$916.30/team

Monte Sparby – Rider
Mitch Eddy – Skier
Tuff – Horse

3rd Place – 34.99 seconds - \$666.40/team

Jesse Johnston – Rider
Ben Graham – Skier
Blue Rock – Horse

4th Place – 36.23 seconds - \$458.14/team

Nicole Burnett – Rider
Andrew Flaschenreim – Skier
Balou – Horse

5th Place – 38.27 seconds - \$374.86/team

Tom Finley – Rider
Ben Graham – Skier
Docs Hollywood Cash – Horse

6th Place – 38.52 seconds - \$333.20/team

Mike Righetti – Rider
Tony Bontadelli – Skier
Someo – Horse

7th Place – 38.63 seconds - \$249.90/team

Eryn Calobeer – Rider
David Oberlitner – Skier
Chromie – Horse

Novice Class – 23 teams – Total Purse: \$1,787.50

Saturday 1st go-round results:

1st Place fast-go: 18.49 seconds - \$134.06/team

Steve Armstrong – Rider
Lance Nelson – Skier
Sonny – Horse

2nd Place fast-go: 18.62 seconds - \$80.44/team

Steve Armstrong – Rider
Barton Slaney – Skier
Sonny – Horse

3rd Place fast-go: 19.01 seconds - \$53.62/team

Kali Kitchen – Rider
Kevin Devaney – Skier
Streaking Spider Mit – Horse

Sunday 2nd go-round results:

1st Place fast-go: 17.82 seconds - \$134.06/team

Steve Armstrong – Rider

Lance Nelson – Skier
Sonny – Horse

2nd Place fast-go: 18.84 seconds - \$80.44/team

Barton Slaney – Rider
Lance Nelson – Skier
Black – Horse

3rd Place fast-go: 18.99 seconds - \$53.62/team

Roisin O'Neill – Rider
Eric Perlstein – Skier
Bailey – Horse

Novice Class Combined – Final

1st Place – World Skijoring Novice Champion – 36.31 seconds - \$497.00/team

Steve Armstrong – Rider
Lance Nelson – Skier
Sonny – Horse

2nd Place /Reserve Champion – 38.95 seconds - \$372.76/team

Kathy Hansen – Rider
Lance Nelson – Skier
Chief – Horse

3rd Place – 39.6 seconds - \$248.50/team

Barton Slaney – Rider
Lance Nelson – Skier
Black – Horse

4th Place – 39.68 seconds - \$124.26/team

Eryn Calobeer – Rider
Kyle Entrop – Skier
Gorgeous – Horse

Murdoch's Long Jump/Saturday – 4 teams – Total Purse: \$850.00

1st Place – 49.8 feet - \$425.00/team

Tim Guest – Rider
Cody Smith – Skier
Cougar – Horse

2nd Place – 43.8 feet - \$255.00/team

Jesse Johnston – Rider
Jimmy Deats – Skier
Blue Rock – Horse

3rd Place – 40.0 feet - \$170.00/team

Jamie Tripp – Rider
Lance Nelson – Skier
Playboy – Horse

Murdoch's Long Jump/Sunday – 4 teams – Total Purse: \$850.00

1st Place – 52.1 feet - \$425.00/team

Tim Guest – Rider
Cody Smith – Skier

Cougar – Horse

2nd Place – 45.3 feet - \$255.00/team

Janae Lukezech – Rider

Andrew Flashenriem – Skier

Hawk – Horse

3rd Place – 40.0 feet - \$170.00/team

Todd Patterson – Rider

Matt Stickney – Skier

Gypsy – Horse