

A Texas-Sized Encore

The West Texas Futurity had another lucrative year, and Sanjo Playn Jacks cashed in on the success.

By Molly Montag • Action photos by S. Sylvester Photography



Sanjo Playn Jacks started her career off with a win in the West Texas Futurity Open, earning \$25,000 for owner/breeder Barnwell Ramsey.

Coming off the success of last year's West Texas Futurity, the largest in the history of the event, show organizers knew they had to do something big to try to keep that positive momentum flowing in 2017.

They knew a significant amount of the record 958 limited-aged entries in 2016 was due to the Mercuria/National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA) World Series of Cutting event, which the West Texas Futurity hosted after the cancellation of the Mane Event III show in Las Vegas.

When the West Texas Futurity's application to host a Mercuria again in 2017 was denied, organizers decided to offer similarly formatted \$25,000-added any-age weekend cuttings anyway. That was in addition to \$2,500-added weekend classes earlier in the event.

The result? The second-biggest West Texas Futurity ever with 857 limited-age entries.

"I think it was a success, [but] a success maybe in a different way than 2016 simply because 2016 was so large," said Skip Jones, president of the West Texas Cutting Horse Association.

Organizers haven't decided if they're going to host the \$25,000-added weekend classes next year. Jones believes their overall impact was beneficial, even though the entries in the classes themselves – 20 in the Open and 28 in the Non-Pro – weren't as many as he'd hoped.

"The way our show works, not only does it enhance the show itself, it also enhances our practice pen, our stall counts and all that, because those guys that come end up bringing 3-year-olds," he said. "They may not be showing them there, but they're training [and] getting ready for [the NCHA Futurity] or for another futurity later in the year."

3-Year-Old Open

Sanjo Playn Jacks started her career off with a bang by taking the 3-Year-Old Open Championship. Nicknamed "Jackie," the mare (Cats Quixote Jack x Sanjo Play x Playdox) and Craig Thompson, an **Equi-Stat Elite \$2 Million Rider**, bested the field with a 221.5. That was good for a \$25,000 winner's check for owner/breeder Barnwell Ramsey, of Huntersville, North Carolina.

"She's been fairly easy to train, because she has a lot of desire to work a cow," Thompson said of the 3-year-old. "Her only setback is that she's just a little bit small and maybe just a touch limited [in that], but that doesn't pre-

vent her from doing her job."

The mare entered the finals after finishing fourth in the first two go-rounds.

"She was really accurate and our second cow was a little bit testy, but man, she nailed it at every turn," Thompson said of the finals. "I was just really happy for her and for Barney, [because] he raised her as a baby and that means a lot to him to start raising some good prospects and to build his breeding program."

The plan was to show the mare in early events like the West Texas Futurity. It helped that Sanjo Playn Jacks proved early in her training she had the consistency and ability to compete at the start of the futurity show season.

"Our goal was to get her shown this fall and hopefully get some money won on her in hopes of getting her seasoned and ready for Barney to begin showing [her] toward the end of the year and next year," Thompson said.

Thompson planned to show the mare in a few more events before turning the reins over for Ramsey to ride her in the Non-Pro. The tentative goal for that to happen was at the Southern Cutting Futurity in mid-October.

Ramsey still owns Sanjo Playn Jacks' mother, Sanjo Play, a mare out of the San Jo Lena mare Sanjo Marla, who earned \$59,425 in the cutting pen. Thompson, who bought Sanjo Play for a bargain \$4,000 as a weanling, rode her to the 2010 Brazos Bash Futurity Open Championship. Ramsey also campaigned the mare.

"Jackie' moves cleaner in the front end versus her mother, but her mother may have had a little bit bigger stop," Thompson said. "But, both of them have a strong desire to work a cow."

Thompson said his win wouldn't have been possible without God, his team and helpers Steve Oehlhof, Lloyd Cox, Jonathan Rogers and Grant Setnicka.

"It's just a blessing to go to one of those events and get your horse showed," he said. "Anytime you walk away with a championship from one of them it can't be taken for granted. They're few and far between, as tough as it is."

3-Year-Old Non-Pro

The 3-Year-Old Non-Pro Championship went to another homebred mare when Ty Moore piloted Sweet Sister Cat to the win. Moore, of Madill, Oklahoma, and the mare



Sweet Sister Cat led a 1-2 punch in the 3-Year-Old Non-Pro for Ty Moore, who also won the Reserve Championship with Heck Ofa Hit.

West Texas Futurity

(includes limited-age classes only)

| Year | Entries | Added Money | Payout |
|-------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1982 | n/a | \$5,000 | \$33,428 |
| 1983 | 404 | \$15,000 | \$169,838 |
| 1984 | n/a | \$0 | \$235,331 |
| 1985 | 419 | \$50,000 | \$207,372 |
| 1986 | 349 | \$60,000 | \$191,670 |
| 1987 | 216 | \$49,998 | \$142,703 |
| 2001 | 321 | \$66,887 | \$239,761 |
| 2002 | 358 | \$75,000 | \$245,777 |
| 2003 | 364 | \$79,000 | \$247,180 |
| 2004 | 405 | \$79,000 | \$256,328 |
| 2005 | 470 | \$79,000 | \$289,958 |
| 2006 | 414 | \$79,000 | \$298,824 |
| 2007 | 579 | \$102,500 | \$410,045 |
| 2008 | 581 | \$125,247 | \$400,234 |
| 2009 | 610 | \$114,500 | \$444,241 |
| 2010 | 466 | \$144,500 | \$390,661 |
| 2011 | 756 | \$144,500 | \$522,701 |
| 2012 | 569 | \$162,000 | \$459,840 |
| 2013 | 658 | \$162,000 | \$488,015 |
| 2014 | 587 | \$162,000 | \$477,062 |
| 2015 | 643 | \$169,000 | \$512,150 |
| 2016 | 958 | \$169,000 | \$708,468 |
| 2017 | 857 | \$169,000 | \$642,274 |