

Extreme Cowboy Challenge

By Denise Schieffer, ITRA

My son Danny and I attended our first Extreme Cowboy Challenge on August 11 at Fisher Farms near Salem, Iowa. We had watched a [very] few of Craig Cameron's shows on TV, and this type of competition is based on Cameron's

teachings. A series of four events were scheduled, with the High Point in Open winning a new saddle, and the High Point Novice Rider and the High Point Novice Horse both winning breast collars.

At the beginning of the day, riders were handed print-outs of courses and obstacles. The obstacles varied among the divisions, and each round was different. Obstacles ranged from: performing maneuvers in the arena, such as mounting, back-throughs and sidepasses; to obstacles outside the arena such as crossing logs, pulling objects, pushing cattle, jumping barrels, and natural trail.

Danny, on *Bright Amber Dreams*, competed first, in the Novice Rider category. There were obstacles in the arena, such as mounting from the offside, a trot pattern, moving a golf ball, and moving a flag. Next, they moved out of the arena to more obstacles, including walking over logs (and I mean **logs**). They climbed up some embankment steps, rode through an arch with items hanging from it, traversed a "bridge," went down a hill and over a creek, then up, around and back over the creek, and finally finished at a mailbox by ringing a bell inside. Danny made the cut and went on to the second go-round. The course was only slightly different for the second go. They trotted a figure 8 in the arena, then wove around some poles and performed a back through, a sidepass, and opened and closed a gate. Outside of the arena, they went over a tarp, did the logs, went down the embankment, over the bridge and moved a flag. Next, they went through some hay bales, then on through the creek, and finished with the mailbox. Danny and Amber ended up placing 3rd, which I didn't think was too bad for their first time.

I took my horse, *My Dreamy Boyfriend* (aka *Moose*), in Novice Horse. We started out great, but when we got to the arch he refused to enter. I wasn't surprised that we



had problems with the arch.

In Novice Horse, the course was almost identical to the Novice Rider course, but in different gaits. Here, we were required to maneuver through a "U" made with large round hay bales.



Surprisingly, Moose refused to go down the slope to the small creek. *Oh well. Something to work on!*

He didn't make the cut for the next go-round.

In the next round, we would have had to load onto a horse trailer, work some calves, and ground tie. This was in addition to some of the obstacles that the second go-round Novice Rider performed.

In the Open round, I rode *Bright Amber Dreams*, with the same sorts of obstacles but with lots more gait changes. We made the first cut and went on to the second go-round. Here, we entered the arena and did two circles, one fast and one slow. Got off and ground tied our horse and moved sand from one bucket to the other. Trotted through some poles, did a back-up and a sidepass, opened the gate, dragged a tarp, cantered through some progressively larger logs, dragged some plastic milk jugs, worked some cattle, went through the arch at a trot, went down the embankment steps, trotted through the hay bales, over some barrels, stopped on the bridge and moved a flag, down to the creek, up and around through some trees (Amber wasn't overly crazy about the stationary deer target!) back through the creek, cantered around some poles and stopped, dismounted and rang a bell in the mailbox. PHEW!!

We barely missed going to the third and final go-round by about 3 points!

The first five places were all within about four points.

I believe the last go-round involved shooting a paintball-type handgun at targets and riding bareback.

The riders ranged from around 12 years old to, well ... I won't guess his age but he had a few more years on him than I do!

It was an interesting time for both my son and I, and I think we'll see about competing in more cowboy challenges!