For Immediate Release

Cowboy mounted shooting contest aims to please

By Regan Emkes and Rachel Janovsky

LOUISVILLE, KY – November 13, 2014 – In its second year at the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE), the Cowboy Mounted Shooting contest is expected to please the crowd yet again with sights and sounds. The excitement is felt not only by the crowd, but also by cowboys and cowgirls as they enter Freedom Hall.

“Of the sixty different course set-ups, contestants choose one by drawing a number out of a hat before they enter the arena,” Dave Harmon, videographer for the event and cowboy mounted shooter himself says. “Riders can’t practice their course beforehand so they are just as surprised as the audience by what they get.”

The Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association (CMSA) is the primary organization associated with Cowboy Mounted Shooting. The sport was born when Jim Rogers and his friends shot action super eight movies in the deserts of Arizona with his friends in 1958. After they were done filming, they would have contests to see who could shoot the most glass bottles tied to the fence posts. Thirty-two years later, the CMSA was officially born.

Competitors are split into different divisions. First, competitors are categorized into a level corresponding with their experience and skill. Then, entries are categorized by gender and age. The contestant with the lowest amount of time, plus any added time penalties, is the victor.

“Typically most courses are run in the twenty to thirty second range,” Dave says. “There are six levels of riders; number one being entry-level. Then, for each numbered level there is a gender split and an age split. There are four different groups within each level, and the contestants shoot within the group in their level. For example, a course that would take a level one thirty-seconds to complete could be completed in about fifteen-seconds by a level six shooter. They move fast.”

Courses for cowboy mounted shooting consists of ten targets; five are randomly placed and five are placed in a row. It is a timed event with a sixty second maximum per course. Contestants can receive time penalties missing a target or an overturned barrel adds five seconds to the contestant’s overall time, and dropping a gun will result in a five-second penalty plus five-seconds for each unused blank. Dropping a hat before crossing the timer is a ten-second penalty. Falling off the horse or a horse going down is an automatic sixty-second penalty.

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Dave has been with the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association (CMSA) for about 10 years. He’s from Portland, Tennessee, and he’s been a cowboy mounted shooter himself for years.

“I’ve never really been that competitive by nature, but still there’s a little competition there that’s fun,” Dave says. “The camaraderie, the friendship that you build with people throughout the nation and the world is really my favorite part of this environment. It’s fun to travel to different places and meet different people. I think I enjoy that best.”

Sharp outfits, sharp riding, and sharp shooters make this contest one that you must to see to believe. The Cowboy Mounted Shooting contest started today and runs through Saturday.

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Photo Available: IMG_4041
Caption: Over 40 riders participated in Thursday’s Cowboy Mounted Shooting in its second year during the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) in Louisville, Kentucky.