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# Stock Horse News

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2008 NRCHA Hackamore Classic

Open Champion

**Tazs Precious Peppy**

ridden by Sandy Collier

owned by Dominic Conicelli

**Peppy**

TOP 10 CA



*Primo*

2008 NRCHA Hackamore Classic

Non Pro Champions

**Anne Reynolds**

**Very Smart Flo Jo**

Owned by Joyce Pearson

*Primo*

## 2008 NRCHA Hackamore Classic Open Champion: Sandy Collier and Tazs Precious Peppy

In a true example of talent and toughness, Sandy Collier, who has the distinction of being the only woman ever to win the prestigious NRCHA Snaffle Bit Futurity, earned the Open Championship on Tazs Precious Peppy. It was Collier's first NRCHA major event win in a few years – although she has consistently been a top competitor in NRCHA events.

The renowned competitor had the odds stacked against her. Just a month earlier, she had torn her rotator cuff while unloading a stallion at the NRCHA Stakes. She made the decision to ride "Taz" in the preliminary round, where she made the finals, and finished seventh overall.

But by doing so, that meant she had to compete in the cow work twice, further injuring her shoulder. When she got home, she scheduled her doctor's appointment so it would fall between the Hackamore Classic and the NRCHA Derby. "My doctor told me not to injure it any more by showing, or else the recovery time would increase substantially. He actually wanted to do the surgery during the Classic, but I told him I couldn't – I had a horse show. That's how we horse people are – surgeries, weddings, and births are scheduled around horse shows!" she laughed.

Collier and the 4-year-old mare, by Pepto Taz and out of Splash A Lil Cash, had missed making the 2007 Snaffle Bit Futurity finals, although the Buellton, California, trainer candidly admits that the mare was the best of the four she rode at the prestigious event. "She got outrun down the fence. She was definitely the most talented one I took, and yet she was the only one who didn't make the finals," Collier noted.

The Hackamore Classic is a single go-round event, so Sandy had only one chance to get it right. She piloted "Taz" to a 143 in the herd work, despite her first cow running through her herd help after two cuts. "Doug Williamson was in the corner, and he picked out a really good cow for me," she said. "I had a lot of time on it, but because of that first one, they got me."

In the rein work, the pair marked a 146.5, and Collier admits she couldn't have been more pleased, noting that the mare could not have worked any better.

Then it was time for the fence work – but this was the area of anticipation for Collier. Although seemingly care-free about her predicament, Collier admits that her shoulder was pretty much everything on her mind before the fence work. She hadn't even schooled her mare – having longtime friend Lyn Anderson take care of that. "I couldn't have done it without Lyn," she said. "She's an excellent horseman, and a great friend."

But when Collier rode into the arena, the spark of adrenaline was enough to quell her fears of injury, and she showed the same determination that has brought her so many championships. "When there's all that money and you know your horse can do it – it erases all those worries," she said. A really good cow combined with the mare's skill, and the pair marked a 148.5 – moving them a step ahead of Jake Telford and Spark N Loulena. Taz's owner, Dominic Conicelli, collected \$18,700 for the Championship. Sandy admits that the championship lifted a little weight off of her shoulders. "I convinced Dominic to purchase this mare after the Futurity – and to let me continue showing her until he was ready. You always want to do well for your owners, so winning this is very nice," she said.

Collier began riding Taz after Jeff Marmelzat and Jim Vangelos purchased the mare at the Snaffle Bit Futurity Sale as a 2-year-old. The mare's sweet, gentle nature has made her one of Collier's favorites to ride. When Conicelli is ready for her, she'll leave Collier's barn to become his show horse. "She'll go when he's ready. I just hope it is not too soon," noted Collier.

Jake Telford rode Spark N Loulena to the Reserve title with scores of 145 in the herd work, 144 in the rein work, and 148 down the fence for a 437 total. The Reserve Championship garnered a check worth \$14,025 for owners Floyd Miller and Newt White. Spark N Loulena is by Shining Spark and out of Mary Lou Lena.