



Forty-five youth from across the country competed for top honors in the 51st annual National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest.

PHOTO BY JD ROSMAN

MEMORIES MADE

Elite showmanship contest at NJAS crowns new champion.

by **JD Rosman**, communications specialist

With pressed white shirts, starched black pants, show harnesses and showsticks in hand, Claudia Hissong and 44 other juniors entered the showing in Des Moines, Iowa.

“When you hit those green shavings, it’s an awesome feeling,” Pennsylvania junior Hissong says.

Showmen must qualify first in their state, as only two showmen from each state are allowed to compete at the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest at the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) each year.

“The level of competition,” says showmanship judge Amanda Raithel, “can only be described as elite.”

Raithel and fellow judges Jon Davis and Rick Blanchard seek showmen who bring a

level of professionalism and poise to the ring, she says.

“The young lady, Claudia, who won the National Junior showmanship competition, might be the smoothest showman I have ever seen in my life,” Raithel says.

As the 51st champion of the elite event, Claudia now stands among the most revered showmen in the nation, claiming the coveted silver bowl and the Dean Hurlbut Showmanship Award.

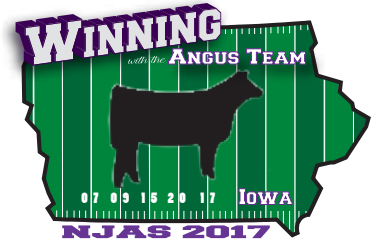
“It means everything to me. [The silver bowl] is something you work toward your whole junior career,” Hissong says. “To get that bowl in hand, it’s very humbling and rewarding, and it’s a feeling like no other.”

It may seem to be just a simple silver bowl, yet it represents days, weeks, months and

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— Claudia Hissong

WINNING WITH THE ANGUS TEAM



► For more about the showmanship contest and winner Claudia Hissong, view this segment of *The Angus Report*: <https://youtu.be/zVPu1sN-6gA8>.



PHOTO BY JENA McRELL

years of work. It shows true dedication and is a symbol of respect.

“When I get the bowl home, it will probably go on the mantle. We are definitely going to clear a spot for it,” she says with a smile. “It is something I can see every day and remember that hard work pays off.”

“The Angus breed and Angus industry [are] unlike any other,” she says. “The people who are involved in this industry are dedicated and hard-working, and to be one of those 51 who won the showmanship title is amazing.”

It’s a title Hissong, without a doubt, deserves, Raithel says.

“When you get out in the open showing, you have to be professional,” Raithel says. “It

was a goal of mine to pick kids who could go to any open show and show cattle for me.

“Claudia is just something special,” she adds.

After the top 15 showmen competed on Saturday, they marched single file back into the ring, without a heifer in hand.

“Standing out in the ring, waiting for the top five to be called, might be the most nerve-racking experience ever,” Hissong says.

“I was preparing myself to not be called; I mentally prepared myself, but [winning] was a great feeling, and the tears started flowing.”

During six years of junior nationals, Hissong says she watched showmanship from outside the ring, dreaming of the day she could compete. At the seventh show, her dream came true.

“The showmanship contest was something I always looked forward to competing in, putting on the black and white and walking in that ring,” Hissong says. “My first [NJAS]

was in 2011 when it was in Pennsylvania. [I] bought my first Angus heifer then and have been hooked ever since.”

She credits her success in the ring and with Angus cattle in part to her mentors, Jaclyn Clark and Lindsay Upperman.

“I bought my first Angus heifer from them, and they got me hooked,” Hissong says.

The mentors and friends made throughout the Angus breed are ones she says are priceless.

“We are competitors in the ring, but best friends outside of the ring,” she says. “The goal is to win, but we make a lot of friends along the way and make some great memories, as well.”

Among her memories with her Angus family, she now shares one only 50 others have: the memory of hearing her name called as the champion showman of the National Junior Angus Show.

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Juniors compete for showmanship honors

During the 2017 National Junior Angus Show in Des Moines, Iowa, 45 junior members competed for the title of champion showman. The preliminary round of the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest consisted of four heats on Thursday, July 13, during which the top 15 showmen were selected. The finalists competed Saturday, July 15, for spots among the top five.

The journey to earning one of the coveted silver bowls awarded to the top five showmen begins in each contestant's home state, where two juniors are selected as representatives. The top showman at the NJAS is honored with the Dean Hurlbut Award, named after the man who organized the first showmanship competition in 1967.

Three judges evaluated the juniors on their skills while handling an animal, their ability to follow instructions, and evidence of courtesy and sportsmanship in the showring. This year's showmanship judges were Jon Davis of Gallipolis, Ohio; Rick Blanchard of Firebaugh, Calif.; and Amanda Raitzel of Falls City, Neb.

The top five showmen in this year's contest include Claudia Hissong, Greencastle, Pa., first; Sydney Schnoor, Chowchilla, Calif., second; Kade Patton, Frankfort, Ind., third; Shayne Myers, Colusa, Calif., fourth; and Conrad Behlmann, Saint Paul, Mo., fifth.

Rounding out the top 15 showmen, who were each awarded a pair of Andis clippers, were Austin Alvarez, Dade City, Fla.; Tim Mardesen, Oxford, Iowa; Kalie Rumbold, Wyanet, Ill.; Anna Carpenter, Wamego, Kan.; Katelyn Corsentino, Denham Springs, La.; Sterling Reichenbach, Bath, Mich.; Adam Bierstedt, Pipestone, Minn.; Jordyn Wagner, Billings, Mont.; Alana Eisenhour, Wellsville, Pa.; and Alexa Montagne, Elk Point, S.D.

Receiving honorable mention were Shayna DeGroot, Edgerton, Minn.; Heather Worlein, Prineville, Ore.; Bethany White, Morton, Miss.; and Megan Albers, Kirkland, Wash.



► **Claudia Hissong** (center) won first-place showmanship honors, winning the prestigious Dean Hurlbut Award at the 2017 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest hosted in conjunction with the National Junior Angus Show. Presenting the Silver Revere bowl are Dean Hurlbut (left), former director of activities for the American Angus Association, and Julie Murnin, American Angus Auxiliary president. The top five winners also received a monetary award from the Hamilton James Memorial Fund.



► The top 15 finalists in the 2017 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest are (from left) **Tim Mardesen; Adam Bierstedt; Kade Patton**, third; **Conrad Behlmann**, fifth; **Austin Alvarez; Sterling Reichenbach; Shayne Myers**, fourth; **Sydney Schnoor**, second; **Katelyn Corsentino; Jordyn Wagner; Claudia Hissong**, first; **Anna Carpenter; Alexa Montagne; Kalie Rumbold; and Alana Eisenhour**.

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