



# Fit to Win

NJAA members compete in first-ever fitting contest at the NJAS.

Story & photos by **Abby White**

The whoosh of blowers, buzz of clippers and the spritz of spray cans could be heard at the first-ever National Junior

Angus Show (NJAS) fitting contest. More than 20 teams competed for the chance to be named top fitters. Winners of the contest were the team from Kansas in first, Indiana in second and Maryland in third.

Ohio team members Sarah Davis, Lauren Grimes, Lindsey Grimes and Bailey Harsh all agreed that the contest was fun.

“It was a nice change,” Bailey said. “We had an awesome good time.”

The team competed in many other contests, but said this was their favorite.

“It gave us something else to do,” Lindsey said.

Following the rules, each state could enter one team, consisting of four individuals — one from each age division and an additional member from any of the three age divisions. Each team was asked to bring its

own washed and dried heifer, bull or steer and to provide its own electricity, chute and fitting equipment.

Grooming chutes and supplies were to be in place at least five minutes before the announced starting time, and each team was allowed 30 minutes to clip and fit its animal.

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PHOTO BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL



► Sarah Davis, Kingston, Ohio, clips a heifer during the first-ever NJAS fitting contest.



► Lindsey Grimes, Hillsboro, Ohio, talks to Jon Davis of Gallipolis, Ohio, one of the fitting contest judges, after she and her team clipped the heifer for the contest.



Each team member was to fit a leg, and use both the clippers and the blower.

Once the animal was groomed, one team member paraded it before the team of judges.

Points were awarded on the ability to fit, worth 25 points; organization of supplies and equipment, worth 5 points; participation of each team member, worth 10 points; overall effect, worth 5 points; and knowledge and response to questions, worth 5 points. Judging was by a three-member panel based on 50 points maximum from each judge. Rankings of the three judges were added for each team, and final placings were determined by combined rankings.

### Fun with something new

The Ohio team's strategy was to have fun and talk to each other. They practiced at the Grimes's house a few times before the NJAS. They also tried to stay calm.

"We had a little trouble with that one," Bailey said. "It's hard to stay calm."

The team had a little bit of experience fitting cattle before the contest, but agreed that it helped them become better fitters. The team now fits their cattle together at every show.

"A lot of kids are getting involved in fitting now," Bailey explained. "A lot of the other breeds' junior nationals have fitting contests, and the people who show more than one



► Winning first place in the team fitting competition are members of the Kansas Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Garrett Lampe**, Scott City; **Brady Jensen**, Courtland; **Brooke Bergkamp**, Arlington; and **Darin Wiley**, Saint Francis.



► Winning second place in the team fitting competition are members of the Indiana Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **John Clark**, Princeton; **Jake Cunningham**, Sheridan; and **Chase Cunningham**, Lebanon. Not pictured is **Craig Meyer**, Greensburg.

PHOTOS BY SHELLA STANNARD

breed are used to having one."

The girls used Lindsey's heifer because her heifer had long hair.

Another aspect that helped the team was that they knew each other's strengths and weaknesses.

"We all get along really well," Lauren said. "We can all communicate."

Bailey said that the fact that they can't use black-colored spray paint makes fitting in general a little more difficult. "You can't go as heavy on the tail adhesive," she said. "It makes them look more natural, but they don't look quite as filled out. It really changes the way you clip."

They all agreed that the one fitting supply they couldn't do without is tail adhesive.

"If you didn't have that, you couldn't pull their legs (leg hair) up," Sarah explained.

Bailey said a comb is pretty important,



► **Above:** Judge Brian Finnestad of Cordova, Ill., compiles his rankings after scoring each team for the fitting contest.

► **Left:** The Ohio team waits for their 30 minutes of fitting time to begin. The team consisted of (from left) Bailey Harsh, Radnor; Lindsey Grimes, Hillsboro; Sarah Davis, Kingston; and Lauren Grimes, Hillsboro.





► Winning third place in the team fitting competition are members of the Maryland Junior Angus Ass'n. Pictured are (from left) **Trevor Whiteside**, Queenstown; **Mark Butler Jr.**, Rocky Ridge; and **Tyler Donnelly**, Emmitsburg. Not pictured is **Chad Hahn**, Rocky Ridge.



► Two fitting contestants bring their chute into the ring to get ready for the contest.

too. "The tail adhesive wouldn't work without the comb," she said.

The team plans on competing in the fitting contest at next year's NJAS in Tulsa, Okla.

"A lot more people can get involved with it," Bailey said. "A lot of people don't think they're good enough to give a public speech or anything. This is something everyone can compete in."



► **Below:** Missouri juniors groom their heifer during the first-ever team fitting competition.



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