

Best of the Best



PHOTOS BY KELLI FULKERSON

States send their top showmen to compete for national honors in the National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest in Louisville, Ky.

by *Ellie Hoffschneider*, American Angus Association



► Fifty-three showmen displayed their skills during the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Louisville, Ky.

Forty-six years ago, Angus youth paraded around an outdoor ring in Lexington, Ky., during the first-ever National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest. That began what is now one of the most highly anticipated events for members of the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA). It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance to represent their state as a top showman — just ask this

year's winner, Jessica Radcliffe, Weston, Wis.

"I was surprised, shocked even," Radcliffe says. "I was happy to even be in the top 15, which is a great accomplishment in itself, because there are so many good showmen. More than anything, I tried to stay relaxed and show the heifer like one of my own."

The showmanship contest returned to the Bluegrass State this year, and 53 showmen displayed their skills during the National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Louisville, Ky. After multiple preliminary heats and an intense final round, the top five showmen were selected.

"This contest is one of the most special at the NJAS," says Anne Patton Schubert, Taylorsville, Ky., one of the showmanship judges. "It's not an easy thing, but it shouldn't be; showmanship means an awful lot. These kids are calm, confident and determined, and those are the qualities of a great showman."

Also judging the contest were Amie Stertzbach of Louisville, Ohio, and Jonathan



► Judges (from left) Anne Patton Schubert, Amie Stertzbach and Jonathan Perry confer during Thursday's showmanship preliminaries.



PHOTOS COURTESY AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

► **Left:** The top 15 finalists in the 2012 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest are (from left) **Jessica Clarke**, Rocky Ridge, Md.; **Kelsey Stabler**, Gaithersburg, Md., fifth; **Katherine Throne**, Lexington, Ga.; **Jessica Radcliffe**, Weston, Wis., first; **Eric McClure**, Saint Francisville, Ill.; **Cole Greiman**, Garner, Iowa, third; **Weston Brandt**, Corning, Iowa; **Melissa Keyes**, Springfield, Neb.; **Kelli Retallick**, Glen Haven, Wis.; **Lauren Grimes**, Hillsboro, Ohio, fourth; **Hannah Rowlett**, Hurricane Mills, Tenn.; **Katelyn Wilson**, Orleans, Ind.; **Christine Bradshaw**, Twin Falls, Idaho; **Katy Satree**, Montague, Texas, second; and **Michelle Malson**, Parma, Idaho.

Perry of Fayetteville, Tenn. Lake Elliott, Adams, Tenn., was the surrogate judge.

The journey to earning one of the esteemed silver bowls, which are awarded to the top five showmen, begins in each contestant's home state. Two juniors can be selected each year to represent their state, but an individual can compete in the national contest only once. The top showman is honored with the Dean Hurlbut Showmanship Award, named after the man who organized the first showmanship competition in Lexington, Ky.

Three judges evaluated the juniors on their skills handling an animal they have never shown before, ability to follow instructions from the surrogate judge, and evidence of courtesy and sportsmanship in the ring.

Rounding out the top five were: Katy Satree, Montague, Texas, second; Cole Greiman, Garner, Iowa, third; Lauren Grimes, Hillsboro, Ohio, fourth; and Kelsey Stabler, Gaithersburg, Md., fifth. Each of the top five finishers received a cash prize from the Ham James Memorial Fund and a silver Revere bowl from the American Angus Auxiliary.

Other showmen selected as top 15 finalists were Christine Bradshaw, Twin Falls, Idaho; Weston Brandt, Corning, Iowa; Jessica Clarke, Rocky Ridge, Md.; Melissa Keyes, Springfield, Neb.; Eric McClure, Saint Francisville, Ill.; Michelle Malson, Parma, Idaho; Kelli Retallick, Glen Haven, Wis.; Hannah Rowlett, Hurricane Mills, Tenn.; Katherine Throne, Lexington, Ga.; and Katelyn Wilson, Orleans, Ind. These finalists each received a cash award and a set of Andis® clippers.

Earning honorable mention were Emily Bannister, Kent, N.Y.; Gregory Connell, Eugene, Mo.; Ashton Gandy, Potts Camp, Miss.; Maggie Jasper, Versailles, Ky.; Justin Kennedy, Nashville, Mich.; Jordan Rauch, Montrose, Ill.; Shannon Schneider, Bluemont,



► Receiving honorable mention in the 2012 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest are (from left) **Gregory Connell**, Eugene, Mo.; **Jordan Rauch**, Montrose, Ill.; **Ashton Gandy**, Potts Camp, Miss.; **Justin Kennedy**, Nashville, Mich.; **Samantha Yonkers**, McCook, Neb.; **Emily Bannister**, Kent, N.Y.; **Shannon Schneider**, Bluemont, Va.; **Maggie Jasper**, Versailles, Ky.; **Tessa Stehr**, Altus, Okla.; and **Clayton Smith**, West Plains, Mo.

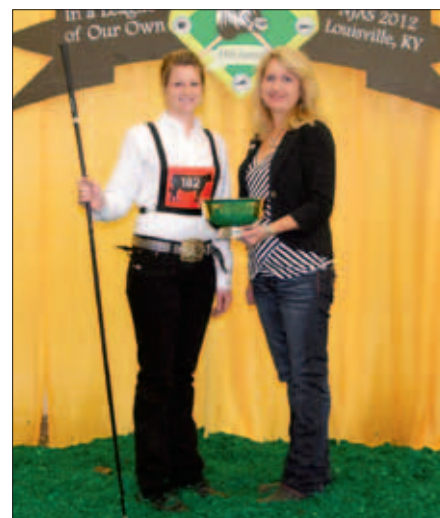
Va.; Clayton Smith, West Plains, Mo.; Tessa Stehr, Altus, Okla.; and Samantha Yonkers, McCook, Neb.

As younger juniors look forward to their chance to compete in this prestigious event, they can take advice from the 2012 winner and judge.

"It's important to listen to the advice of people around you," Radcliffe says. "They know what they are talking about, because they are watching you in the ring. As a showman, you don't have the same perspective as those standing along the fence."

"Find someone whose showmanship skills you admire," says judge Amie Stertzbach. "Watch them closely in the ring, and don't be afraid to ask them questions."

Editor's Note: *Ellie Hoffschneider is public relations and communications intern for the American Angus Association.*



► **Jessica Radcliffe** (left), Weston, Wis., claimed first-place showmanship honors, winning the prestigious Dean Hurlbut Showmanship Award. American Angus Auxiliary President Anne Lampe presented the silver Revere bowl in honor of Dean Hurlbut.