



►“The top 15 selection went a lot different than I expected, a lot faster. The worst part was being in the first heat and having to just sit and watch the last three,” says Allison Manchester.

PHOTO BY NICOLE LANE

Practice Makes Perfect

Top junior showmen from each state compete in the prestigious NJAS event in Tulsa, Okla.

by **Sarah Harris**, communications and public relations intern

The showmanship contest is one of the most highly anticipated events of the year 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 Allison Manchester, Manhattan, Kan., who now holds the top title from the 2015 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Tulsa, Okla.

Fifty-two showmanship contestants displayed their skills during the 2015 NJAS

July 12-18. After multiple preliminary heats and an intense final round, the top five showmen were selected.

The journey to earning one of the esteemed silver bowls, which are awarded to the top five showmen by the American Angus Auxiliary, begins in each contestant's home state, where two juniors may be selected as representatives. At the NJAS, showmen are

divided into four heats, each evaluated by the judges who then narrow the group to the top 15.

Three judges evaluated the juniors on their animal-handling skills, ability to follow instructions, and evidence of courtesy and sportsmanship in the showring. This year's showmanship judges were Danielle Foster, Mount Eaton, Ohio; Amanda Schnoor, Ohio; and John McCurry, Ohio.



► **Allison Manchester** (left) claimed first-place showmanship honors, winning the prestigious Dean Hurlbut Award. American Angus Auxiliary President **Lynne Hinrichsen** presents the Silver Revere bowl.



► Top five finishers in the showmanship contest receive a cash prize from the Hamilton James Memorial Fund and a Silver Revere bowl from the American Angus Auxiliary. Pictured are (from left) **Amanda Schnoor**, judge; **Danielle Foster**, judge; **Karisa Pfeiffer**, fifth; **Reid Shipman**, fourth; **Kory Kovert**, third; **Will Harsh**, second; **Manchester**; and **John McCurry**, judge.

PHOTO BY PEARLS. PICS COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

Modesto, Calif.; and John McCurry, Burrton, Kan.

The top showman at the NJAS is honored with the Dean Hurlbut Award, named after the man who organized the first showmanship competition in Lexington, Ky. Rounding out the top five were Will Harsh, Radnor, Ohio, second; Kory Kovert, Crothersville, Ind., third; Reid Shipman, Manhattan, Kan., fourth; and Karisa Pfeiffer, Orlando, Okla., fifth. Each of the top five finishers received a cash prize from the Hamilton James Memorial Fund and a Silver Revere bowl from the Auxiliary.

The remaining showmen in the top 15 were awarded a pair of Andis clippers. Those showmen include Katlyn Tunstill, Fayetteville, Ark.; Madeline Taylor, Lavaca, Ark.; Morgan Penner, Lafayette, Colo.; John Reasor, Wildwood, Ga.; Madison Butler, Vincennes, Ind.; Reese Johnson, Slaughters, Ky.; Jacob Heimsoth, Cameron, Mo.; Michelle Keyes, Springfield, Neb.; Mary Oliver, Union City, Tenn.; and Jared Radcliffe, Weston, Wis.

A winner reflects

“The top 15 selection went a lot different than I expected, a lot faster,” Manchester says. “The worst part was being in the first heat and having to just sit and watch the last three.”

The initial group of 52 had to be cut down to less than a third. Once selected as one of the top 15 showmen, Manchester prepared to show in the final round of showmanship Saturday morning — the last day of the NJAS.

After the small group of remaining contestants appeared in the ring one final time, they were asked to sit and wait as the judges determined the winners. Once the scores were tallied and the final results were in, the top 15 contestants walked out into

the showing in a single-file line where they waited nervously for the results.

“The lineup was the most nerve-racking part,” Manchester says. “I wasn’t nervous at all during the show, but when we were standing side by side, I was terrified.”

The top five were announced in order from fifth to first. In fifth ... fourth ... Manchester’s fellow Kansan was called as the fourth-place winner.

“They kept calling names and got down to first. When I heard them announce, ‘and from Kansas, I just started crying,’” Manchester says, crediting everything to her father’s teaching and persistence.

“Growing up, I didn’t like showmanship because it’s always at the end of the show when I was tired, but my dad always made me do it, and I am very thankful that he did,” she says. “It’s been one of the best experiences I’ve ever had.”

The victory was made greater the moment she walked out of the ring and embraced her dad, who drove from Indiana to show his support and see her compete.

Advice to juniors

As younger members of the NJAA look forward to their chance to compete in this once-in-a-lifetime event, they can take in words of encouragement and advice from the judges and older showmen.

“It’s not how well you present yourself, it’s how well you present the animal,” Schnoor says. “Do showmanship every time you’re in the ring, keep practicing, and get as much ring experience and exposure as possible.”

Manchester says practice makes perfect in the showing.

“I practice at home a lot, without using a show stick,” Manchester says. “I don’t spend

hours on it. I just set them up two or three times before I let them out at night, and they get so used to it that when you walk into the ring, they’re pretty automatic.”

Schnoor agrees.

“My advice is to walk into the ring as much as you can, and practice, practice, practice. It’s like doing homework, you can’t get an A on your test unless you do the homework beforehand,” Schnoor says. “The National Junior Angus Show is a great place to learn from and inspire your peers in both barn and the ring.”



PHOTO BY KASEY BROWN

► The top 15 showmen had to show without their show sticks for a portion of the finals.



► The top 15 contestants compete in the final round of the showmanship competition. Pictured are (from left) McCurry; Foster; Schnoor; **John Reasor, Jared Radcliffe, Shipman, Kovert, Jacob Heimsoth, Harsh, Michelle Keyes, Reese Johnson, Mary Oliver, Manchester, Madeline Taylor, Madison Butler, Pfeiffer, Morgan Penner and Katlyn Tunstill.**