

April 13, 2008

I have read and re-read Bronc Willoughby's proposal ad ad-nauseum the last few days. I see some of the issues we have been discussing over the past few years addressed either directly or indirectly within the proposal. Re-vamping the monies earned will certainly bring the earning structure within the realities of today's contests, and, playing the devil's advocate, I can see some logic and merit in reclassifying the showing membership as Open, Non-Pro, or Youth. HOWEVER, and I emphasize HOWEVER, it does not level the playing field across the board, nor does it eliminate the US vs. THEM divisiveness that exists in the Association.

Having served on the Amateur committee since its inception, and the Board of Directors for six years, I believe I have some grasp of what comprises the strengths and weaknesses of the NCHA. The "Weekend" and "LAE" contestants are all NCHA members. Subsequently, they have every right within our rules to compete in BOTH type shows. However, the perception of the folks that never get to Ft. Worth is that they are second class citizens within the organization. This comes not only from the Non-Pro/Amateur. It is perpetrated from Professionals, it comes from the contestants, and it comes from Show Producers and Judges. It is an accepted fact that the governing body of the Association and the Headquarters staff subscribe to this thinking. This is highly divisive and counterproductive. Point of fact; how much time has the Amateur Committee devoted to weekend events over the last three years? Almost zilch. Instead we have been embroiled in a Limited Non-Pro issue, which is actually none of the Amateur Committee's concern. For two years now, our entire effort has been devoted to that question, and that issue has no satisfactory solution as of yet.

Bronc's proposal has some limited effect to level the playing field, but it falls far short of the mark. As there was no accompanying documentation outlining the reasoning behind the proposal, and, if in fact the whole purpose of this is to make the competition based on earnings, than here are my suggestions;

1. All competitors to be classified as either Ope, Non-Pro or Youth.
2. Non-Pro riders must be eligible under the stated Non-Pro rules of eligibility
3. ALL Weekend and LAE monies earned, count toward class eligibility. (horse in horse classes; rider in rider classes)
4. Weekend AND LAE Classes would be as follows;
 - a. Open-Self Explanatory.
 - b. Non-Pro-Same as existing class.
 - c. 150K Non-Pro Class - Added monies can be same as Non-Pro, but not less than 75% of Non-Pro purse.
 - d. 75K Non-Pro Class - Added monies not to exceed 75% of Non-Pro, but not less than 50% of Non-Pro purse.
 - e. 20K Non-Pro Class - No added monies allowed.

f. 3k Limited Rider Class - Same structure as present 2K Limited Rider Class/Any horse any rider.

g. Novice Horse Classes - Eligibility based on TOTAL LTE/Weekend and LAE

h. Novice Horse Non-Pro Classes - Eligibility Based on TOTAL LTE/Weekend and LAE

I. Youth Classes - Extend the non-owned horse rule to Senior Youth competitor till the end of their youth eligibility.

Shared family horse rule would be permanently adopted as in present practice.

What this will accomplish;

1. It will level the playing field as much possible.
2. It will negate the US and THEM mentality.
3. It will add value to the greater percentage of horses that are not LAE horses.
4. It will simplify recordkeeping within the association, and its affiliates.
5. It will streamline every show approved by the NCHA.
6. It will by proxy, reemphasize the uniqueness of the CUTTING HORSE.
7. It will allow NYCHA members to show till the end of their Youth eligibility with no strictures.

Again, this was ginned up as a possible expansion on Bronc's proposal. It has no hidden agenda, serves no particular segment of the NCHA, and is a compilation of ideas that have been tossed around by people all throughout the NCHA. You know me; I am not clever enough to come up with this by myself, so I credit 90% of the ideas here to others.

Regards
Chuck Love