

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*(Note: This release is time-sensitive as it pertains to an event with an application deadline of September 4th.)*



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*Photographs available.*

**\$5500 in Prize Money Up For Grabs  
at the 2009 Versatile Horse & Rider Competition**

**W. SPRINGFIELD, MA, November 13–15, 2009**—Thirty pre-selected horse and rider teams will compete for the title of “Versatile Horse & Rider Competition Champion” and \$5500 in cash and other prizes at the 2009 Versatile Horse & Rider Competition which is slated to take place November 13–15 at Equine Affaire in W. Springfield, MA. Now in its third year at Equine Affaire, the Versatile Horse & Rider Competition is a timed and judged race through an obstacle course that is designed both to push horse and rider teams out of their traditional “comfort zones” as well as to test communication between horse and rider and the horsemanship skills and athletic abilities of each team. Attendees of Equine Affaire will enjoy the excitement of watching competitors from different disciplines riding horses representing a wide variety of breeds negotiate a truly challenging obstacle course at top speeds.

The 2009 Versatile Horse & Rider Competition will be conducted within the 95’ x 200’ parameters of the Eastern States Exposition coliseum. The competition course will feature a combination of some traditional as well as “not-so-traditional” trail obstacles and riding challenges such as jumping

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over or through obstacles, backing through a pattern, pole bending and/or roll backs, various gymkhana games, working gates, and riding over or through difficult/spooky objects. Ken McNabb of Cody, WY, will serve as the judge for this year's competition; he will be joined in the ring by Tommy Garland of Powhatan, VA, who will provide "obstacle by obstacle" feedback for the audience and encouragement to the competitors as they tackle the course.

During the Versatile Horse & Rider Competition, the performance of each horse and rider team will be judged on each obstacle for both quality of horsemanship and timing. For each obstacle, the judge will award performance points on a scale of 1 to 5 based on the rider's horsemanship, the horse's attitude, and the team's overall performance. Horses and riders will be required to complete each obstacle within 30 seconds in order to receive points. If an obstacle is not completed within the given timeframe, the contestant will be flagged and must move on to the next obstacle. Times will be translated into points, and the team with the highest overall point score will be the 2009 Versatile Horse & Rider Competition Champion.

A maximum of 30 horse/rider teams will be selected to participate in the race. Qualifying rounds will be conducted on Friday and Saturday afternoons, and the top 10 horse and rider teams in these rounds will advance to the Versatile Horse & Rider Competition Finals on Sunday morning. This year cash prizes will be awarded to the top *four* contestants. The first place team will receive \$2,500 and the title of Versatile Horse & Rider Competition Champion while the second, third, and fourth place teams will receive \$1,750, \$1000, and \$250 respectively. Additional prizes will be announced prior to the event, and all prizes will be awarded at the conclusion of the Finals on Sunday morning.

Equine Affaire's Versatile Horse & Rider Competition will be open to all riders age 18 years and older

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and horses of all breeds and disciplines. All horse and rider teams will compete against each other; there will be no “divisions” based on gender or age. The entry fee for each horse/rider team is \$350. Individual riders may compete with more than one horse in the race, if they submit a separate application and fee for each horse they wish to enter. Applications and support materials will be accepted by Equine Affaire through September 4th; they will be reviewed by the management of Equine Affaire, which will select the final contestants for the Competition and notify contestants by October 1st. To obtain all of the details on the Competition and an entry form, consult [www.equineaffaire.com](http://www.equineaffaire.com) or contact Coagi Long at [clong@equineaffaire.com](mailto:clong@equineaffaire.com) or by calling (740) 845-0085 ext. 114.

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