

# CAHC/REGION VIII YOUTH HORSE JUDGING TEAM

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## Local Youth Earn National Championship

Youth from across the country competed at the U.S. Arabian & Half-Arabian National Championship Youth Judging Contest in Tulsa, Okla. last week and the junior team representing the Colorado Arabian Horse Club (CAHC)/Region VIII Arabian Horse Association were named National Champions. The CAHC senior team earned a third-place finish while another member represented Colorado 4-H to help their team to a third place in their respective division.

The contest was hosted during the national championship horse show on Friday, October 27, 2023. Team members competed in both team and individual categories. The Junior Arabian Horse Association (AHA) division is for local affiliate club members under the age of 18, the Senior AHA/Collegiate division is for 19-23 and the 4-H/FFA division is for 4-H and FFA members across the country.

The junior CAHC/Region VIII team won a national champion trophy, champion buckles and scholarships from the Arabian Horse Foundation. Team members included Clara DeSouza of Erie, Colo., Rhiannon McDermid of Berthoud, Colo., Josie Temple of Erie, Colo. and Audrey Wright of Erie, Colo. Out of almost 40 individuals, Clara was ninth in halter, first in performance, third in reasons and third overall. In her first national contest, Rhiannon finished twelfth in halter, sixth in performance, eighth in reasons and eighth overall. Josie was fifth in halter, eleventh in performance, first in reasons and sixth overall. Audrey was third in halter, second in reasons, seventeenth overall. All junior members are also 4-H members who compete on the Boulder County 4-H Horse Judging Team.

The senior team was composed of Bailey Burke, a Colorado State University graduate, Kylie Carson from the University of Wyoming, Maddy Gable from the University of Montana and Hailey Nicolls from Colorado State University. Kylie and Maddy are previous 4-H Horse Judging Team members. Mattea McQueen of Berthoud, Colo. represented Boulder County on the combined Colorado 4-H team and earned an impressive tenth in reasons and a team third place finish.

The junior AHA national championship marks the 22<sup>nd</sup> win for the team since 2000 (reserve national champions in 2008). The contest is organized by the AHA in conjunction with the U.S. National Arabian and Half-Arabian Championship Show. More information and results: <https://www.arabianhorses.org/youth/>

In addition to these three hard-working teams, Colorado was well represented with El Paso County 4-H (Colo.) earning the Reserve Championship in the 4-H/FFA division.

The CAHC/Region VIII team and the Boulder County 4-H team are coached by Kendra McConnell of Longmont, Colo. Kendra was successful as a youth and collegiate at the U.S. Arabian & Half-Arabian National Championship Youth Judging Contest many times as well as other national level competitions such as the Paint World Show, All American Quarter Horse Congress, Quarter Horse Youth World Show and the 4-H National Roundup.

Contestants from 4-H, FFA, Arabian Horse Association (AHA) affiliate clubs and collegiate teams from across the U.S. and Canada competed in the day-long contest split into three divisions totaling 23 teams and over 100 individuals. They evaluated ten classes of Arabians and Half-Arabians then delivered four sets of memorized oral reasons defending their placings in select classes which are scored on accuracy, terminology and presentation.

Competitive horse judging offers a challenging opportunity for youth to further their knowledge of horses. Team members learn to evaluate horse conformation and performance while developing skills such as critical thinking, public speaking and team building. Contestants are scored based on how close their placings of mock classes are to the official panel. They are then asked to deliver a two minute, memorized oral defense of their placing of certain classes.

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The Boulder County 4-H Horse Judging Team will host a kickoff for the spring season on Wednesday, January 24, 2024. Interested members are welcome to attend a fun potluck at the Boulder County Fairgrounds to learn more about the team and competitive horse judging plus fulfill their 4-H judging requirement. Enrollment in the 4-H horse project is not required. For more information, find the team on Facebook @Boulder County Horse Judging or email [bouldercountyhorsejudging@gmail.com](mailto:bouldercountyhorsejudging@gmail.com).



L-R: Mattea McQueen, Rhiannon McDermid, Clara DeSouza, Audrey Wright, Josie Temple and coach Kendra McConnell



L-R: coach Kendra McConnell, Hailey Nicolls, Bailey Burke, Kylie Carson, Maddy Gabel, coach Justine Dunlap-Truly



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Colorado representation: CAHC/Region VIII junior team, CAHC senior team, Colorado 4-H team and El Paso County 4-H team members and coaches