

CH Real Action

The People's Choice Junior Exhibitor

Three-Gaited 13 and Under Horse of the Year

By Jenny Grey



CH Real Action and Reagan Campbell were undefeated at Louisville last year winning both the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 and Under World's Championship and the Junior Exhibitor 13 and Under Three-Gaited World's Champion of Champions title with a unanimous vote of the judges.

CH Real Action has been a superstar from the day he was born. Newly paired with 13 year-old Reagan Campbell for the 2015 show season, this dynamic duo arrived in the show ring ready to take on the world. Perfectly matched, they became a formidable team in a remarkably short time. In order to do this great horse justice, Reagan made personal sacrifices, working long and hard to ensure she was ready. Her trainers from the beginning, Bill and Lisa Waller, forged them into a powerful partnership. With the encouragement of her wonderfully supportive parents, Amy and Darby, Reagan was about to have a year she would never forget.

CH Real Action (AKA Jackson), the consummate show horse, has enjoyed an almost undefeated show career with six world championship titles between 2008 and 2014 that included the Open Three-Gaited World's Grand Championship in 2011 with Peter Cowart in the irons. Believing this outstanding open horse would excel in the 13 and under division challenges the imagination, but Bill and Lisa Waller believed it could be done.

Reagan Campbell was addicted to horses by the time she was two years old. When her grandmother took her on picnics as a toddler, all she wanted to do was sit by a pasture watching horses grazing, sometimes staying there all day. This was a mystery to her parents who

were never exposed to horses. Amy admits to having been a little intimidated by them, so it was a few years before Reagan learned to ride.

Acting on the advice of a friend with Tennessee Walkers, Amy took Reagan for lessons at Bill and Lisa Waller's Clover Leaf Stables when she was eight years old. In training with them ever since, she took to the sport like the proverbial duck to water. Beginning in the Academy division in 2011, she rapidly graduated to Class A competition in 2012, winning most of her classes before taking her first trip to Louisville. No one could have anticipated that a child with so little experience would do so well, but the Saddlebred world gained an early glimpse of Reagan's talent as the Walk-Trot Saddle Seat Equitation 10 Years Section II World's Champion. Having no idea of the significance of a win at Louisville, Amy thought "That's nice; she just won." When John Privette talked to her after the class she laughed as she remembered him saying, "You have no idea what happened, do you?"

Bill and Lisa used those two equitation years to assess Reagan's strengths and determine where her interests lie. When the family bought Montano, she took her first rides in walk-trot pleasure. Moving up to the 13 and under division in 2014, they placed well all season, but Reagan was soon ready for a new challenge. Determined to find a really special horse, Bill and Lisa tried several, but it took a while to find 'the one'.

Taking a trip to the Conatser's farm to try out more horses just before Christmas in 2014, Bill and Lisa discovered Jackson was for sale. With a couple of interested parties ahead of them, they had to wait, but the Wallers checked frequently, believing he could be the right mount for Reagan's junior exhibitor years. Their persistence paid off. When they received a call telling them they needed to come immediately to try him out, Darby took Reagan out of school on Monday and by Wednesday, the deal was complete. After a long search, they had found the perfect match. The horse Reagan fell in love with arrived at Clover Leaf Farm on Valentine's Day, 2015.

"He's a different kind of horse," observed Bill Waller, who gets as much pleasure from working Jackson on a day to day basis as he does at a show. "He's professional every day. There are no gimmicks. He's a joy to be around and has such charisma and personality. From the very beginning it was such a neat combination. And you had better believe he is game!"

With a short time to prepare for the 2015 season, Reagan had a serious challenge ahead. "She worked her tail off," Bill remembered. "It took dedication. No matter how hard we asked her to work she never batted an eye." "She gave up cheerleading to do this," Lisa added. "She gave up a lot to focus on the horse." Not only did Reagan give 100% effort in her workouts, she got to know him from the ground, frequently visiting him in his stall. Describing his extraordinary power and beautiful motion she said "He's such a show horse and so solid but when you get in his stall he's a little monkey and he loves to play." "Most of her phone is taken up with selfies of Jackson or Montano," Lisa said, laughing. "If Reagan's missing, she's probably in one of the stalls."



Proud parents Darby and Amy Campbell with Reagan's sister Reese were on hand to celebrate Reagan's unanimous, undefeated world's championship victory with her new horse for 2015, CH Real Action.



Lisa Waller, Reagan's trainer, gave Reagan a big hug after her unanimous world's championship victories with CH Real Action who had only been in training at Clover Leaf Stables since Valentine's Day, 2015. It took a lot of hard work and dedication on the part of Reagan and Bill and Lisa Waller to have this new team ready to excel at Louisville.

Forging a partnership remarkably quickly, this pair was unbeaten at the prestigious Lexington Junior League show, winning both the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 and Under qualifier and the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 and Under Championship unanimously. "People knew she was competition and were coming over to congratulate her. Now there were expectations," Bill observed, wisely noting that learning to deal with people's expectations is an important part of growing up.

With Louisville on the horizon, the Campbell family was now acutely aware of the significance of a victory pass on the green shavings. Watching her daughter show in the qualifier, Amy's biggest hope was for Reagan to perform well enough to show in the championship. She need not have worried because Reagan and CH Real Action won the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 and Under Section II World's Championship as the unanimous choice of the judges. Amy was stunned, saying "I want to cry just thinking about it!"

On finals day, Reagan was nervous but focused. "She was mentally and physically prepared," Amy told us. "She had worked so hard and given up so much to do this. I felt as if her head was in it. She was poised and ready to give it all she had." Another fabulous ride left them undefeated with a second, unanimous win as the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 and Under World's Champion of Champions. "I will never forget it as long as I live!" Amy exclaimed, grateful that Darby and their younger daughter, Reese, arrived at Louisville an hour before her class. "It didn't sink in right away. We were in the stands hugging and crying. For the rest of my life it will be an all-time favorite memory. It was so magical." A first World's Grand Championship title for Reagan, she felt a rush of emotions when the results were announced. Knowing she had a really good ride, she was still surprised and in shock when she took her victory pass. Bill and Lisa Waller were thrilled and consider the unanimous votes in both championships a real honor. "It was truly exciting," said Lisa, looking back at their accomplishments. "It was an amazing year."

Not able to rest on their laurels, there was more work to do. Getting better each time they rode, with the confidence acquired from their Louisville success, Jackson and Reagan completed their incredible season winning the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited Championship at the Southern Saddlebred Fall Finale and the Junior Exhibitor Three-Gaited 13 and Under National Championship at the American Royal, taking a final victory pass in the junior division.

Bill and Lisa Waller have done a superb job, setting this talented team on a path to victory in just a few months. Not only has Reagan bonded with Jackson, she sees Bill and Lisa as surrogate parents. Amy laughs as she remembers Reagan saying, "Not that I want anything to happen to you and dad, but if it does, can I go and live with Bill and Lisa?" "I'm so grateful she has this relationship," Amy reflected. "They have given her so much confidence...she has learned determination; she's focused; she's learned good sportsmanship... the same skills she will need in life. People told me this would make her a better person and it's true. I am most proud of what she went through, how she got there and how she handled it when she got there."

Bill and Lisa Waller include Reagan as part of their extended family. "She's wonderful to work with", said Lisa. "She's real and sweet and truly loves her horses. She adores Jackson and she's in it for the right reasons. The Campbells are a great family – very supportive and trusting."

Excited to move up to the 14-17 age group and the new challenges it brings, Reagan knows she is blessed with a horse that has no limits, outstanding trainers dedicated to making her the best she can be and caring, supportive parents who have provided her with the opportunities to succeed. With all these factors in play, CH Real Action, a superstar from the time he first set foot in the show ring, earned your well-deserved vote as the People's Choice Three-Gaited 13 and Under Horse of the Year.