



THE RED SHIRT FUTURITY: CONCEPT

The sport of reining is an exciting and dynamic series of maneuvers combined to create a pattern that each horse must perform. Over the last 20 years breeders, owners and trainers have worked to select blood lines and refine training methodologies that have advanced the sport to where it is today. With all of our advancements we still face the challenges of training young horses to perform at the marquis events as 3 year olds.

The term Red Shirt is derived from college football/athletics whereby athletes are “Red Shirted” or allowed to participate in training and suit-up during their initial year but do not actually play in a game. College enrollment is extended to five years in lieu of four with the concept that the student athlete will increase in size, strength and physical maturity during his initial year off. The Red Shirt Futurity is for any four year old horse that was not shown in a three year old Futurity. This Red Shirt Futurity is designed to bring value and longevity to horses that may not be physically ready to endure the rigors of training that is necessary to compete in the three year old Futurity schedule.

Great Western Reining Association recognizes that not all horses that start into training can be successfully shown as 3 year olds. The “Red Shirt Futurity” represents the first opportunity for our industry to provide a format to allow the young horses that need another year to mature with a venue to show and win money. This Futurity is designed to bring value and longevity to these horses that may not be ready to endure the rigors of training for the 3 year old Futurity schedule. Eligibility for the Red Shirt Futurity is any 4 year old that did not show in any 3 year old futurities.

As an industry we need to recognize that not all horses are physically and often times not mentally ready for the rigors of training to be shown as 3 year olds. How we handle that is the question at hand. One position is that because it is difficult only the very best of the horses can compete at the futurity making them an elite group of horses. The Red Shirt Futurity concept does not detract from this premise. It adds to and actually increases the value of the 3 year old Futurity.

Recognizing that some of our young horses need more time to mature and develop is a first step. The industry goal should be longevity for our horses.

Expanding the futurity system allows us to keep the 3 year old Futurity system in place which helps select for a early maturing durable group of horses and makes their pedigrees more valuable. Additionally, it allows for the slower maturing or the horse that was injured and required some recovery time a showcase similar to the “Big Futurity”. These horses do not have to compete against the horses that did show in a 3 year old Futurity.