

Claibelle's Shadow McCurdy Takes on KY

By: Casey Eckert

Since this is basically my last Summer (last one before the real world), I decided to spend some of my time at home with my parents in Versailles, Ky. I usually never want to stay long since my horses were in Alabama so I decided to bring them with me! I brought two of my McCurdys, Shadow and Scarlett. They have loved the lush Kentucky bluegrass and the cooler temperatures since we have been here, except for the first few weeks when they got to wear grazing muzzles.



On our first weekend, we headed to Shaker Village of Pleasant Hill, about 30 minutes away for The Three Phase Event (A One of A Kind Combined Versatility Event For Gaited Horses). We spent 2 days there competing in dressage, stadium obstacle, and cross country. I boldly decided to enter us into the training division (the highest division offered) even though I had never competed in anything like this. I just knew Shadow could handle it! Dressage was first. It was something we have NEVER done. I had spent the week before trying to just remember the pattern. Shadow had been frustrated with me because she had gotten a new bit, bridle, saddle, (all dressage stuff I didn't own...even borrowed all the clothes) and a rider trying to do all kinds of new things. Shadow had never even been inside a dressage arena. She is so brave and willing so I really didn't think it would be a problem. The fake flowers around the arena wouldn't even begin to scare her. And to no surprise she was wonderful. With neither of us having any technical training ever, we did better than expected. After dressage we were in third place.



Later that afternoon we tackled stadium obstacle and obstacles are one of our favorite events. We carried a flag, walked through a sand box, over poles, backed down and up an incline, and then even walked over a mattress.



We then crossed a bridge, dropped a bottle of water in bucket and stood still for ten seconds, dismounted and remounted, walked through a car wash, and finished by ringing a bell. She did great and we were High Point Overall in Stadium Obstacle. After our great win in the second phase, it improved our overall score enough to put us into first place overall in the training/preliminary division.

The second day we tackled the third phase cross country out on the trail. We had to travel a designated trail through natural obstacles over the countryside and cross the finish line in an optimal time. It was so nice and I really enjoyed the time on the trail when it was just me and my magnificent horse. Shadow was sure-footed over the slippery rocks, resilient in the sloppy mud, and enjoyed galloping across the open fields. It was a great experience.



At the completion, we were awarded Overall High Point Winner in the Training /Preliminary Division, Overall High Point Stadium Obstacle, and she was also awarded the Best Conditioned Horse in her division by the veterinarian. Each year the winners get their names engraved on the plaque of the Three Phase Event trophy and so our names will appear there for next year! We also were awarded a first place trophy ribbon and Shadow received a Champion ribbon. We also took home a very nice cash prize (more cookies for Shadow)!



To see a video of us at The Three phase event go to: <http://youtu.be/q3cGaFgVRsY> or the ClaibelleFarm channel.

For our second weekend in Kentucky, we headed to Winchester to compete in our first ACTHA ride. Once again I decided to shoot for the moon and enter us in the Open Division even though we had never done this before. We introduced more people to the McCurdy breed and shared with them her smooth gait, ability to complete so many different obstacles well, and her speed after competing in a separate obstacle speed competition.



We came in second and were awarded a second place ribbon, ACTHA bucks, and another nice cash prize!



To see us compete in the speed obstacle challenge(Shadow and I start of the video and gallop the first 20 seconds, at the 1:25-1:35 backing around barrels, and then finishing the video up at 2:20. Check out: http://youtu.be/HGI_X7Fp2fw

We then spent the next weekend in my home town, Woodford County Fair Parade where we also won first place in the animal division and received a first place ribbon and a cash prize! Claibelle's Shadow McCurdy and Claibelle's Scarlett McCurdy showed the crowd the McCurdy Plantation Horse. The announcer told the all the parade guests about McCurdys, where they originated and how versatile they are. We had people telling us we were their favorite and how gorgeous the horses were and everyone wanted to know more. It was a wonderful experience to share the McCurdy breed with so many people.



I am so proud to be able to own, ride, and compete on such versatile horses. Their natural ability makes everything come so easy and I love every minute I spend working with, riding, or just talking about them. I am so blessed to have such wonderful horses in my life!