

Stallion's Breeding Career Survives Cutting Threat

Ask Temecula, Calif., trainer Tim Smith, a career winner of nearly \$4.9 million so far as a cutting horse rider, to name his favorite horse and he'll answer WR This Cats Smart.

The 1999 stallion (High Brow Cat x The Smart Look x Smart Little Lena) carried Smith to 24 limited-age finals, and the duo finished with \$236,747 in cutting earnings. They ended their successful partnership in style, too. The pair won a four-round National Cutting Horse Association Open Show Championship at the NCHA World Finals in Amarillo, Texas, during mid-February 2006, soon after the horse turned 7.

"He's the best horse I've ever had the opportunity to ride," Smith said, adding he's been reminded of his favorite quite often this summer and fall. That's because Smith has been watching and competing against many of WR This Cats Smart's foals, including 2010 Fort Klamath Futurity Open Champion Hallie Cat, 2010 Idaho Derby Open Champion Double Smart Cat and 2010 El Rancho Futurity Open Champion WR Bano.

"It [WR This Cats Smart's success as a breeder] is nice because people don't realize how close he came to becoming a gelding," Smith said.

WR This Cats Smart, bred and originally owned by Wiens Ranch Co. Inc., Sedalia, Colo., and trained his 3-year-old season by Scott McClurg, Lipan, Texas, did not compete at the 2002 NCHA Futurity due to a paperwork error, Smith said. McClurg still worked the horse on cattle at a training facility owned by Smith's longtime friend and fellow cutter Phil Rapp in Weatherford, Texas, shortly before the 2002 NCHA Futurity. Smith and Rapp both liked the stallion from the start.

"Scott worked him on a couple of cows and I thought, 'That's a pretty nice horse.' Then Phil got on him. He drove him off on some really fast heifers. The horse just shifted gears. I could see the wheels shifting in Phil's head," Smith said. "I knew him well enough to know what he was thinking and I said, 'Do me a favor and just stop. I'm going to buy him.' So Phil quit and I went and bought the horse for Don Dubin."

Dubin, Bonsall, Calif., a career winner of nearly \$206,000 as a cutter, wanted a horse to replace one he'd been competing successfully with, 1995 model Travalano (Travalena x War



Competing at their final event in Amarillo, Texas, during early 2006, WR This Cats Smart and Tim Smith won an Open Show title at the NCHA Open World Finals.

Lano Missy x Doc's Solano) a career earner of \$191,136 – and a gelding.

"He [WR This Cats Smart] was within a week of becoming a gelding," Smith recalled. Then Smith took him to his first cutting in January of his 4-year-old season.

"It was a small derby in El Centro, Calif., but there were 40 or 50 horses in it. We won both rounds and the finals. I told Don, 'This horse is way better than I thought he was.' And I suggested holding off on gelding him."

Dubin did not want to compete with a stallion, so he sold the horse to Michelle Ware, Malin, Ore. Ware owned WR This Cats Smart as he and Smith recorded most of their \$43,720 in 2003 earnings, plus \$69,494 in 2004. In December of the stallion horse's 5-year-old season, Hare sold him to Wagonhound Land & Livestock, Douglas, Wyo., owned by Art Nicholas. Wagonhound Land & Livestock has owned him since then.

As a 6-year-old, Smith hauled WR This Cats Smart more often and the horse really came into his own, earning \$104,480 while competing at limited and any-age shows.

"He just had a way or mesmerizing a cow," Smith said. "He just kind of hovered on the ground and that's what they [WR This Cats Smart's foals] are doing. To see the colts has been a really big thrill."

WR This Cats Smart stands at The Four Sixes Ranch in Guthrie, Okla., and he's attracting interest from reining and reined cow horse owners, along with many cutters.

"He was supposed to be a gelding. Now he's one of the premier studs, certainly on the West Coast," Smith said. "You never know what's going to happen when you promote a stallion. It's such a crap shoot, but it certainly looks like he's going to make it." —MT