

lot of people were there. I thought for sure she was going to be a big seller. I just got lucky."

Out of Tarizana by Taris Catalyst, "Millie" was such a gentle mare that Miller broke her out as a 2-year-old.

"I was the first one who rode her," she said. "I'm not a real great rider but she turned out to be really easy. She didn't get harder until her 3-year-old year."

That's when Miller asked some of the young trainers at the ranch to help her.

"I like to say I broke her, the guys fixed her," Miller said with a laugh.

In 2008, Adam Johnson qualified Millie for the AQHA World Championship Show in the junior reining, but missed the finals.

Millie was given some time off, and then started on cattle last year. Johnson had moved on to another barn and Miller asked Jeremy Knoles to take over the reins.

"Jeremy is really good with her. He's a really good horseman," Miller said.

As the office manager at the Carol Rose Ranch in Gainesville, Texas, Miller couldn't travel to San Angelo to watch the preliminaries on Feb. 2 because breeding season had started the day before.

Watching the live webcast, Miller saw Millie and Knoles turn in a great rein work and an even better fence work.

"She just had a smoking fence run and we were waiting for the score," she said. "Carol called and said, 'I think she's zeroed in the rein work.' I said, 'NO!'"

Instead of backing up, Millie almost rolled back after one of her stops.

"It was one of those that was right on the line," Miller said. "Carol said, 'I think she did,' and then she hung up the phone on me. Then she called back and said, 'Did you see where she zeroed?' I said, 'Did she really zero?' My computer sound cut out, I didn't hear the score. And Carol said, 'I'll call you right back again.' She hung up the phone and she doesn't know this but Jeremy called and told me the score. She then called back and I tried to pretend like I didn't know. But I knew."

Knoles told her he had marked a 213 in the rein work and a 225 in the cow work, winning the prelims with the 438 composite. Miller hopped into the car and drove to San Angelo to watch her mare in the finals on Feb. 5.

Kyle Trahern and MH Bold Intentions were first to work in the Limited Open Hackamore finals and they immediately set the score to beat: 439.

"I was tickled with our score," Trahern said. "This is the third run this horse had to make this week and he stayed good the whole time."

Trahern owns "Mac," who is by Bodee Boonsmal and out of Freckles



Kevin Stallings and Shining Lil Nic continued their winning ways with the Open Two-Rein World Championship.

Stallings (left) also won the Open Two-Rein Reserve World Championship, riding Voodoo Chic.

Docs Oak by Doc's Oak. In the finals, the pair marked a 217 in the dry work and a 222 on the fence.

But then it was all about waiting for the next nine riders.

Knoles and Millie were fifth in the draw, and the Gainesville, Texas, trainer was a little nervous.

"She felt pretty good in the prelims but I wasn't sure if she had another run in her like that," he said.

But Knoles soon discovered she did. "She felt better to me than she ever has (in the rein work)," he said.

Moving into the fence work, Knoles was pleased with the cow they drew.

"He was a little fast, but she's a fast mare. It worked out all right."

More than all right, with the pair marking a 218 in the rein work and a 224 in the cow work and putting their composite of 442 three points higher than Trahern's.

"I was so surprised," Knoles said. "I

didn't expect to win. And that's probably the highest reining score I've ever marked on any horse."

The \$3,857 check boosted Millie's earnings to \$5,000. —TRG

Open Two-Rein

Kevin Stallings and Shining Lil Nic (Smart Shiner x Dig A Lil Nic x Diggers Rest) have become very familiar with the winner's circle at major NRCHA events in recent months.

The Arizona horseman and the buckskin stallion, owned by Bill and Janiejill Tointon, Longmont, Colo., won both the Open Bridle and Open Two-Rein Championships at the NRCHA Snaffle Bit Futurity in September. Their winning streak continued in San Angelo, as they bested 10 Open Two-Rein finalists with a 442 composite score. The World Championship win paid \$4,755. Shining Lil Nic's **Equi-Stat** earnings now top the \$87,000 mark.

Stallings also earned the Reserve World Championship, scoring a 434 and winning \$3,804 on Voodoo Chic (Smart Chic Olena x Lenas Black Witch x Dynamite Badger), owned by Rogers Heaven Sent Ranch. Stallings and "Voodoo" also won the 2009 Open Bridle Reserve Championship at the Snaffle Bit Futurity. Her show earnings now top the \$33,000 mark.

Stallings' third Open Two-Rein entry, Shining Miss Lena (Shining Spark x Missy Lena x Doc O'Lena), won fourth place in the World Championship finals, marking a 428.5 and adding \$1,902 to her earnings. The mare is also owned by Rogers Heaven Sent Ranch.

"We're very blessed," said Stallings, whose wife, Karen, is an accomplished non-pro rider. "To do what we did at Reno was huge, and to come here and get all three of them in the finals, too — that's pretty special."

Working sixth in the set, Shining Lil Nic marked the high score in both the rein and the cow work, starting with a smooth 217 reining pattern.

When the cow stepped through the gate, Stallings was happy with how his horse handled it on the end, but decided to take some extra time before bringing it down the fence.

"The cow didn't move a whole lot. I stayed with it, and made it move a little bit more so I could get more feel on it," Stallings explained.

The strategy paid off. After three tight fence turns, Shining Lil Nic circled the black steer cheek-to-cheek, never weakening as it bounced off his shoulder several times.

"He circled up running hard, and circled the cow down to a stop, so it was pretty cool," Stallings said.

The judges rewarded his run with a score of 225, the high point of a jubilant morning for Stallings and the Tointons.

"It's just so great. We were so hoping he could do this here. We're just tickled pink!" Janiejill Tointon exclaimed. She purchased "Nic" as a 10-day-old foal from his breeder, Carolyn Kupka, a Boulder, Colo. dentist. It was love at first sight when Tointon saw the colt's photo as she sat in Kupka's dental chair.

"I started him myself. He's really special," said Tointon, who welcomed the 7-year-old stallion's first foal crop in 2009.

Stallings has accumulated more than \$270,000 in earnings since **Equi-Stat** recorded his first paycheck in 2001. The Idaho native and former ranch cowboy honed his childhood riding skills on horses his father bought dirt-cheap at the local auction. Particularly memorable was "Buckshot," a \$12 bay gelding who might have missed his true calling as a rodeo bronc.