



## \$25,000 RAM Invitational Freestyle Reining Recap



An electric and emotional atmosphere filled the CINCH Arena in the Events Center during the \$25,000 RAM Invitational Freestyle Reining. This year's champion, Devin Warren, impressed the judges and moved the crowd with a touching routine emphasizing that we should never let go of our dreams and to not let anyone tell us we can't achieve anything we set our mind to. He performed to "A Million Dreams" from the Greatest Showman soundtrack. His gray gelding "Lil Joes Cash n Gold" owned by Grace Wins LLC, sparkled under the

spotlight and possesses strong lineage back to others the Warren's have raised.

This year's event honored the late Guy Vernon, who was an integral part of the starting \$25,000 RAM Invitational Freestyle Reining and the only rider to be invited and compete in every invitational freestyle reining for 26 years at the National Western Stock Show. To celebrate his lasting impression, his best friend Terry Wegener sent a video to open the show encouraging riders and attendees to enjoy the event as much as he enjoyed performing for them. Several riders added their own subtle nod to him in their routines, most recognizably, his daughter Lacey Vernon Fleming. She rode a touching tribute to her father to Whitney Houston's "I Will Always Love You" aboard the Grace Wins LLC horse "Sure Steps". Instantly a crowd favorite, Lacey won the People's Choice award from a supportive crowd. Renowned judges for the event were Pete Kyle, Todd Arvidson and Terry Thompson, along with Travis Chapman as equipment judge.

Melia Barlow, Moriah McQueen, and Belle Pescatore were selected to perform our Youth Freestyle Reining Showcase this year and had the crowd in awe of the talent they exhibited. From flames to American pride, bridleless to saddleless, they entertained with their talent and creativity.



The 2023 \$25,000 RAM Invitational Freestyle Reining was unlike any other. The audience was awestruck with the finesse demonstrated and backgrounds shared from each exhibitor. Congratulations to all competitors for their exceptional rides, allowing the crowd to connect with the long history of freestyle reining at the National Western Stock Show and share these incredible equine athletes with the public.

To learn more about the \$25,000 RAM Invitational Freestyle Reining, please visit <https://nationalwestern.com/horse-shows/>

To learn more about the Youth Freestyle Reining Showcase, please visit <https://nationalwestern.com/horse-shows/horse-exhibitors/horse-youth-programs/>

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