

## AMATEUR POLE BENDING

BRANNON RILEY AND HALEY JOS CHARM HAVE A TIME OF :19.886 IN FINALS TO WIN TITLE. BY [TONYA RATLIFF-GARRISON](#), JOURNAL FIELD EDITOR



Brannon Riley and Haley Jos Charm round the end pole in the amateur pole bending finals.

Coming into the amateur pole bending finals on November 8, Brannon Riley and his bay gelding were standing fifth from the prelims with a :20.424. By the time the pair ran through the end gate, though, they had smoked the World Show arena with a time of :19.886, giving them a combined time of :40.310. The Journal caught up with Brannon in the Super Barn to ask him about his winning run and the athletic 6-year-old Haley Jos Charm.

**Q. Tell me about your ride tonight. BRANNON:** Well, I came in pretty far behind and everybody I was running against, I run against all year, and I knew I was really going to have to lay one down. Once I hit the first end pretty good, I kind of let him roll. He pretty much did it on his own.

**Q. How was your run? BRANNON:** The ground wasn't as fast down here. I didn't really think he had that in it tonight, but he did real well. We could have lined it up again and run that top 10 again, and it could have been all flip-flopped around.

**Q. Where were you coming in from the prelims? BRANNON:** Fifth. I had a good prelim run; I was like three-tenths (of a second) behind the leading horse.

**Q. Tell me about this horse. BRANNON:** I saw him at a show when he was a 4-year-old, a guy had just gotten him started. Usually it's not my style to buy one that's already going, but he was, I could just tell. And he was Kentucky-bred; I was looking for a Kentucky-bred horse. I talked to the guy and bought him. It took me a little while to get him up to where he had to be to win these kinds of shows, but he's pretty solid now. He's a cranky horse, but he's the kind of horse where you could run him all week long. He's real tough.

**Q. What do you do for a living then? BRANNON:** I'm an accountant. I also do some blacksmith work.

**Q. How do you find the time to get into your hobby of pole bending? BRANNON:** There's always time. There are 24 hours in a day; if you want to do it, you do it.

**Q. Is there anyone you'd like to thank? BRANNON:** Well, my parents got me into this when I was a kid. I think I was 11 or 12 years old when I actually started out riding a horse of my dad's, one that he used to ride. I just really took a liking to the pole bending. I guess I've got to thank them. And my wife supports me. She does a lot of the work at home.

**Q. As a world champion, could you give us three tips that you'd give to someone wanting to reach that goal? BRANNON:** One, your first turn is obviously the most important part of the run, so it doesn't matter how you run down, but you need to come out of that first turn straight.

Two, keep your lines and your horse as straight as you can the whole way through the run including coming out of the turns. You should never let your horse get kind of or counter-parallel with the poles.

Three, you can't be afraid to go fast. You're going to hit a pole every now and then going fast, but you're going to hold yourself back if you don't let your horse go on a little bit. Too many times I see people more afraid of hitting poles than going fast.

**BETCHA DIDN'T KNOW:** Brannon Riley holds the amateur pole bending World Show record of :19.631, which he set in 1997 on A Sharp Nesian. It was his first amateur pole bending world championship. He won the amateur pole bending world title again in 2006, this time on Miss N Fantasy.

## WINNER STATS

Horse name: Haley Jos Charm  
Pedigree: 2003 bay gelding; Undertaker Billy x Eclipse Of Time by Joey Time  
Exhibitor/owner: Brannon Riley, Creston, Ohio  
Breeder: Curtis Cruse, Richmond, Kentucky

Total class entries: 29  
Purse: \$8,856.89

World Champion Prizes: Custom-designed gold-tone trophy, Montana Silversmiths buckle, neck wreath, gold medallion, Cripple Creek-logo jacket with a world champion patch, Professional's Choice product, Justin Boots, Nutrena feed