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MEDIA RELEASE

Northern Ireland Horse shoer declared World Champion Blacksmith



World Champion Blacksmith

The 2008 World Champion Blacksmith, Paul Robinson of Northern Ireland accepts his \$10,000 cheque from Blaine Virostek chair of the Blacksmiths' committee.

Calgary – The World Champion Blacksmiths' competition is a four day marathon of mental and physical toughness that takes place annually as part of the Calgary Stampede Stock show. Using coal fires to heat their bar stock, farriers pounded out shoes and competed in a variety of classes that test their speed, knowledge, skill and spirit from top to bottom July 3-6, 2008.

Paul Robinson of Northern Ireland was here on his third trip to the championships and pulled out all the stops in the final day of competition and was declared the World Champion Blacksmith, collecting a \$10,000 payday.

The top ten aggregate scores competed in the semi-final earlier in the day. Robinson was sitting in fifth spot behind five other top contenders. Six-time World Champion Grant Moon who came out of competition retirement was leading into the semi-final. In the second spot, Robinson's business partner David Varini. Bill Poor, the 2007 champion was hot on his heels in third and Jim Quick a many time top ten competitor was actually tied with Robinson leading into the semi-final.

Robinson's efforts in the semi-final, shoeing the front feet of a horse, saw him surpass Moon and Quick and found him only six points behind David Varini of Scotland. In the final, Robinson's efforts were enough to surpass Varini and earn the championship.

Filled with emotion, Robinson took some time for the win to settle in. "It's bloody brilliant."

"I've been shoeing horses for sixteen years; this is what I dreamed to do." Says the shoer who now resides in Scotland.

Robinson has always been a competitive person, playing football (or soccer) and (grass or field) hockey as a kid. When he had to decide on a career, his dad had some influence. "My father had race horses. I had a choice of three things to do; I got my apprenticeship for farriery and for an electrician and I was in to college to do agriculture. I just had to pick. I came to Scotland and liked horseshoeing and that was it."



Robinson trained with Jim and Allan Ferrie who mentored him, learning, 'just good horseshoeing', along with David Varini. "It definitely drives you when you've got someone to compare your work to on a daily basis. You're always training to be better."

"The challenge is keeping your head. That's the main thing. Stay in control."

Blaine Virostek, chair of the World Champion Blacksmiths' committee was pleased with the quality of the competition. "The scoring is high overall. It's a lot tighter."

"It was anybody's game. It came down to how you shoe a foot."

This year's competition hosted a heavy horse shoe theme and the opportunity meant a lot to competitors from around the globe. "We wanted to be able to develop an opportunity for guys like Grant Moon and the Ferrie brothers to have a mentorship. Where else does a guy from New Zealand get to see someone from Scotland and learn from them?"

The World champion Blacksmiths' competition offers top-caliber competition and unique opportunities for people in the trade to share ideas and compete on a world stage.

For more than a century, the Calgary Stampede has been a gathering place for one of the most unique agricultural and western event showcases in the world.

For further information on the Cowboy Mounted Shooters log on to www.stampedeagriculture.com

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For more information, please contact:
Stampede Agriculture
T 403.261.0162
F 403.262.3067
E crowat@calgarystampede.com

Laurel Wood
Agriculture Event Coordinator
T 403.261.0414
F 403.262.3067
E lwood@calgarystampede.com

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