

RUS NY Fair Series caps off successful season

from RUS NY

Things do not always click at the right time, but timing could not have been better for the winning horse and rider of this year's RUS NY Fair Series final.

Andrea Pratt earned her first racing under saddle victory aboard My Friend Charlie at Monticello Raceway as the duo captured the championship title. It was not an easy journey for either of them, making the win even more gratifying.

"Winning the final was very fulfilling for me," Pratt said. "I feel that I had worked hard all summer with multiple horses and just couldn't quite get to the winner's circle, whatever the reason might have been.

"That day, for Charlie and I, it all worked out."

Pratt did not acquire the horse until later in the season, giving them both a delayed start at getting into the fair final. She did not begin training or riding Charlie until about halfway through the series and found it hard to keep him flat on the small and narrow tracks.

"As Charlie's trainer I felt proud we won as a team, just us," Pratt said. "He and I worked hard, made multiple changes (equipment, routine, shoeing etc.) and learned along the way. It means just that much more, to me, when it's your efforts that put you on top."

Pratt said she went into the final knowing it was a pretty open race as she believed each of the five horses had their strengths and weaknesses.

The 32-year-old rider said, "Strongbow and Striking Mystery were on home turf, Winner (Winner's Star K) is good on the small tracks, Iron Will is fast/big, but had been laid up for a while. I knew I needed to get to the rail and try to follow someone, which I did but then had to put Charlie on the front because he wanted to go! As long as he stayed flat I knew he would do ok."

[The RUS NY Fair Series final](#) was a non-wagering event held on Sept. 2. It marked the second year of the series, which included nine races at seven fairs across the state. Horses earned points during the series to determine final entries.

All participants received \$650 for earning their way into the championship race. Monticello Raceway contributed \$2,500 toward the final and the rest of the funds came from the series' flagship sponsor the New York Sire Stakes. The NYSS generously donated \$5,000 as initial purse money.

The winner also received a championship cooler donated by Peterson's Harness Shop in Vernon, N.Y. and a lead line donated by Divine Equine Custom Equipment.

Michelle Miller, of Milford, N.Y., earned this year's High Point Rider Award. She participated in every RUS fair event this year including getting three wins in a row aboard the 14-year-old American Winner gelding Winner's Star K. She concluded the fair series with two victories in one day at Tompkins County Fair in Trumansburg.