

Lainie DeBoer



AQHA Professional Horsewoman Lainie DeBoer

A Journal Q&A with the
2015 Professional's Choice
AQHA Professional
Horsewoman of the Year.

By Megan Arszman

QHJ: When did you become an AQHA Professional Horseman, and what does that title mean to you?

Lainie: I believe I became an AQHA Professional Horseman in 2005. Honestly, I really didn't know much about the group itself, but I was asked to serve on the committee, and I had to apply before I could serve.

When I got the packet of information and read the code of conduct sheet that I had to sign, that was all the convincing I needed – I was in. The code of conduct epitomized everything I stand for as a professional. I couldn't wait to become a member of this great group of professionals. When I am asked what my profession is by someone or on an application, I say AQHA Professional Horseman, and it makes me feel so proud.

QHJ: During the banquet when the Professional of the Year award is presented, the announcer just lists accomplishments without calling names. As the announcer kept talking, when did you realize he was talking about you?

Lainie: I am not sure I ever figured it out until they called my name, because it is such a surreal situation. It is kind of like an out-of-body feeling. I even walked right up to the podium, and I looked over and there were two people standing in the middle of the stage with a ring box looking at me like, *Ummmm you need to come and get your award first and then take a picture.*



What I Know Now and AQHA Professional Horsewoman
Lainie DeBoer won junior hunter hack at the 2015 Lucas Oil AQHA World Championship Show. At the time, "Mac" was owned in partnership by Lainie and her mother, Margaret Roth of Longboat Key, Florida.

QHJ: Was being the Professional of the Year a goal for you?

Lainie: No, because it is such a unique award. I think you just dive right into your industry and get as involved as you can. I believe that you get out of something the amount you put into it. I have always felt that the Quarter Horse has given me such an incredible gift, and getting involved was the way I could give back to the horse I love so much. This award is just icing on the cake for me.

QHJ: What's your ideal American Quarter Horse?

Lainie: My ideal American Quarter Horse is intelligent, athletic, willing, trainable, kind, beautiful and good-minded.

QHJ: Do you have a favorite horse?

Lainie: I could never nail that down to just one because I have had so many cool horses in my life. I definitely won the lottery of American Quarter Horses to train.

QHJ: Many of my friends in the horse show world would be surprised to learn that I ...

Lainie: I was a two-time speed-skating national champion and skated in the Olympic trials when I was young. My life could have gone in a totally different direction at one point.

QHJ: Wait ... speed skating? How do you go from speed skating to riding some of the most successful American Quarter Horses?

Lainie: I started speed skating at 5 years old, because that's what you do when you live in Minnesota in the middle of winter. I would stop showing and riding in September and start back up when my season was over in April. When I was older, I would live in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with family or in a hotel with my mom and train at the only refrigerated track in the country. That was where Eric Heiden and Bonnie Blaire trained, so I had some pretty amazing people to look up to. That is why I try to go out of my way to encourage young kids, because they were so nice and encouraging to young skaters, and it meant the world to me.

When I was 12, I won the national outdoor and indoor

(short track) national championships, and broke eight records in the process. Then I switched over to a different style of skating, metric, which is what you see in the Olympics. I didn't like it as much because you couldn't chase anybody – it was strictly against the clock.

But I got to the point in my training where I had to make a choice: I took summers off to show my horses, and it was soon not going to become an option because the Olympic team trained in Colorado in the summer with intense dry land training. I never wanted to give up the horses.

The first winter I did not skate, I was showing my horse in Florida and I thought to myself, *I could be on a starting line in a skintight suit in freezing weather right now, or sitting on my horse in the sunshine in January.* It was pretty clear I made the right choice.

QHJ: What does the future hold for you?

Lainie: I am not sure what the future holds, but I know in the showing department, I am slowing down a bit. I like things on a smaller scale so I can find a healthy balance of work and family.

Now that my two daughters are getting older (17 and 13), I want to enjoy this time as much as possible before I am an empty nester. I do want to stay active in AQHA with the welfare commission, committee work, the Foundation and being a national director for Minnesota. I really enjoy giving my time and it is so rewarding for me.

I also would like to do more clinics. I have been going to Switzerland for the past four years and I just love the people so much. Traveling internationally and spreading the word of AQHA is very exciting for me.

QHJ: What legacy do you want to leave?

Lainie: I would want everyone to remember me as someone who was always giving great care to my horses, treated them with respect, was an advocate for the horse and that I was a good horsewoman. 🐾

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