



## *Determination and Diligence: The Pathway to Success*

# 2023 ANCER & ANCCTR COVERAGE

By: Rachel Daugherty,  
with recollections by Damaris Smith and Kim Rumpsa

The weekend of September 29th to October 1st, 2023 brought some of the best endurance and competitive trail ride horses and riders together in Menahga, Minnesota to compete. The Appaloosa National Championship Endurance Ride (ANCER) and Appaloosa National Championship Competitive Trail Ride (ANCCTR) were held in conjunction with the Arabian Horse Association Distance Horse Nationals, held during the Huntersville Hundred AERC Endurance Rides. This event was not for Appaloosas only, but was a distance championship ride for multiple breeds.

Taking on challenges and breaking new ground for themselves, last year's ANCER and ANCCTR competitors displayed great determination and diligence to achieve their personal goals. For ANCER competitor Damaris Smith and her gelding, Joker, it was their fastest 50-mile finish yet. For ANCCTR competitor Lisa Guiffrida and gelding, Jake (owned by Kim Rumpsa), it was about finishing their first ANCCTR strong, despite the lack of competitors to challenge them onward.

### **ANCER**

Last year the 50-mile ANCER race was finished by the one and only competitive team: JOKERS WILD STREAK ('Joker') and Damaris Smith. In reflecting on the race, Smith noted how uncertain their attendance to the 2023 race was, considering they had a slow 2022 winter and dealt with saddle-fit issues up until just two-and-a-half

weeks before the race. She wrote, "Due to the fact I wasn't sure if we would be able to make it, we missed the early entry deadline, thus I hand carried my entry to the ride. As I settled in, I heard the numbers of my potential competitors slowly decline throughout the day. It ended up that we would be the only entry in the 50-mile Appaloosa Championship. So, it was Joker and I against the time and the trail—a true 'to finish is to win' scenario."

The morning of the race, Smith and Joker were the only Appaloosa team among 27 other riders. "I knew that my goal was to simply finish and finish strong. This was our first 50 of the season and having only stepped up to 50s last year, I was questioning if we were ready. I reminded myself, we are a 50-mile team, I had put in the work; I had to trust my horse," stated Smith.

Coming in 16th out of 28 riders, Joker and Smith completed the ride with an official time of 6:41—their fastest 50-mile yet. In addition to their great finish, the team was honored with the prestigious George Hatley Best Condition award; this award is given to the horse judged by the ride veterinarian to be in the best condition at the end of the ride. Smith reminisced, "Joker only slowed down by the last loop and even then, not by a lot. The vet commented that he looked like he could just keep on going, but I'm not sure that I was in the same

*Photo above: Damaris Smith and 'Joker' during the 2023 ANCER race. Photo by Elli Kramer.*



Damaris Smith and 'Joker' enjoying the ANCER ride. Photo by Elli Kramer.

boat. And just like that, we had finished and won. Everyone I met in camp was great and so, so supportive. I knew that all the Appaloosa people in camp were all in my corner cheering us on."

**ANCCTR**

In the 40-mile ANCCTR, two Appaloosa competitors entered the ride together: long-time friends and riding partners, Kim Rumpsa and Lisa Guiffrida, who rode R SECRET LUCKY SEVEN ('Seven') and R SECRET ANNIVERSARY ('Jake'), respectively.

Both Seven and Jake are home-bred and owned by Rumpsa, who has competed in the ANCCTR in past years and was thrilled to have these two horses eligible to participate in the 2023 ride. The only problem: she could not ride both! Rumpsa wrote, "My very first thought was to ask Lisa if she wanted to join me. Early into my phone call to her, she agreed to join me. She'd wanted to participate in it for quite a while, and this was her first chance."

Before the big ride, Rumpsa met up with Guiffrida to get her and Jake acquainted. Rumpsa described Jake affectionately as a, "16.3 hand high, LAZY, 20-year-old registered Appaloosa gelding." When it was time, the team of four drove 15 hours to Menahga—they were ready to ride. "Physically and mentally, we were prepared for Saturday's ride," Rumpsa recalled. Upon arrival to Menahga, the pair found out they were the only two Appaloosa teams competing in the 40-mile ride. They vetted in Jake and Seven, settled in, and relaxed, anticipating the next-day's ride.

Unfortunately, the next morning Rumpsa discovered Seven had a rope burn on his left rear pastern. "Sadly, my mistake: I should have changed out lead ropes when I first noticed an issue. I took Seven to the vet in the morning, she assessed the situation, and Lisa and I started our ride on time," wrote Rumpsa. After their first loop, however, Seven was pulled from the ride. Rumpsa reminisced, "The trail was terrific and the weather was perfect." But after being pulled from the ride, she stated, "[Guiffrida] had ridden MANY rides by herself,



Lisa Guiffrida and 'Jake' ride alongside Kim Rumpsa and 'Seven' during the 2023 ANCCTR. Photo by Arabian Horse Association.

and this second loop would be no different. She was comfortable, confident, and ready for the challenge to complete. I was her biggest advocate."

Jake and Guiffrida completed the last two loops, but not without much effort on account of Guiffrida, who had to keep Jake moving since he had, according to Rumpsa, "lost his incentive to move forward [he missed his buddy, Seven]." Nonetheless, Jake and Guiffrida made it with five minutes to spare before the cutoff time—they were the last competitor to finish. Jake vetted in well and Guiffrida was ready for a long nap. While the team rested, Rumpsa accepted the ANCCTR first place awards for Jake and Guiffrida—awards that were well-deserved, and received with much appreciation.

**PLACINGS**

**50-Mile ANCER Champion/George Hatley Best Condition:**  
 JOKERS WILD STREAK, owned and ridden by  
 Damaris Smith (Niles, MI)

**ANCCTR Champion:**  
 R SECRET ANNIVERSARY, owned by Kim Rumpsa (Ware, MO)  
 and ridden by Lisa Guiffrida (Winfield, MO)



Damaris Smith and 'Joker' proudly display their awards. Photo by Sue Smith.



Lisa Guiffrida and 'Jake' celebrate their ANCCTR finish. Photo by Kim Rumpsa.