

BY HEATHER LOVERIDGE

Mariana Vazquez, Markham, Illinois

SHE MAY BE ONLY 13, BUT SHE'S ALREADY giving adults a run for their money. Since she started competing about two years ago, Mariana Vazquez has quickly gained confidence and is now competing on 3 year olds in the derbies and futurities. This year she competed in the NRBC for the first time.

"I started in the non pro riding my old horse, Juiced Up Doc, in small shows," Vazquez said. "Then, after I felt comfortable riding in the non pro, I started riding 3 year olds."

It helps that Vazquez's coach is not only her dad but also successful non pro and owner Jose Vazquez.

"Reining's a good way to spend time with him because he's usually busy working," she said. "We both love what we do and spending time together is a bonus. I have five older siblings but I'm

the only one that reins.

"My favorite show memories are ones where I either tied with or beat my dad. It's pretty cool to be able to say I beat him!"



A rising 8th grader, Vazquez works hard to balance school and showing.

"My friends help me out a lot and my teachers are very understanding and help me get my work done," she said. "My mom Teresa is awesome too. She really supports me and helps me stay focused."

As far as this year, Vazquez is hoping for a successful All American Quarter Horse Congress showing.

"Last year I didn't do so well. This year I want to make it through the second go round," she said. "I just love showing and being able to forget about everything else and focus on what I'm doing in the show pen."

CURRENT TOP 20

(As of shows input May 11, 2012)

Rider	Earnings
1 Manuel Bonzano	\$19,388
2 Susy Baeck	\$15,188
3 Carlie Thompson	\$12,357
4 Kyle Johnson	\$11,945
5 Veronica Deans	\$11,133
6 Claudio Rizzo	\$9,985
7 Joe Wolfe	\$9,480
8 Daniele Mascarello	\$9,350
9 Jose Vazquez	\$8,936
10 Javier Melo	\$6,745
11 Anne Reynolds	\$6,236
12 Piet Mestdagh	\$5,924
13 Daniele Whitney	\$5,653
14 Francesca Sternberg	\$5,131
15 Mariana Vazquez	\$5,113
16 Ronald Thompson	\$4,984
17 Kelle Smith	\$4,894
18 Tina Kuenstner-Mantl	\$4,845
19 Josiane Gauthier	\$4,799
20 Jordan Donnelly	\$4,783

Susy Baeck, Montenu/Amel, Belgium

WHEN IT COMES TO REINING, IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR FOR SUSY Baeck. She and her sister, NRHA Professional Cira Baeck, ride out of the family ranch, Eifel Gold Ranch Baeck, and enjoy having each other's support.

"Cira knows me, and knows when I need sweet support and when I need some ass-kicking!" Baeck laughed. "She will always tell me the truth, especially when something doesn't go well.

"I think she is the best trainer you can imagine and I am 100 percent sure she will make it in the Open! She did such a great job last year in her first year as a pro."

Baeck's currently showing Pop Gun Cash BB and also looking forward to showing some Futurity horses Cira's preparing for her.

"Being co-champion this year (on Pop Gun Cash BB) at the NRHA European Futurity in the Non Pro division is my best

victory so far," she said. "He's a really talented horse and not the easiest one to show."

Along with showing, Baeck also manages the ranch's breeding operations. She initially went to school to become a veterinarian, but realized that wasn't the right career for her.

"I learned a lot in the three years I was at school and don't have any regrets," she said. "I love the job that I do now. I love showing reining horses, but breeding reining horses is my passion.

"I love seeing a talented 2-year-old doing the maneuvers effortlessly. Then you know you did a good job as a breeder."

Baeck's only wish is that she had more time to spend with family.

"Whatever free time I have I spend it with my family," she said. "As long as I can see my son I am happy!"

