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Higgins 'lives dream' on horse



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A few months removed from competing at the 2015 National Cutting Horse Association World Championship Futurity – “the crown jewel” of the sport – Neil Higgins is getting back in the saddle.

Higgins and his horse, Ernie – named after Higgins’ grandfather – are currently training for the 2016 cutting-horse season, which begins locally next month.

Horse cutting is an equestrian sport in which a rider and horse work together to demonstrate the horse's ability to herd cattle, and are given a score from a judge or panel of judges.

"As a rider, we go into the herd and separate the cow and then the horse takes over... it's a 2½-minute adrenaline rush," Higgins explained.

The first event on the [BC Ranch Cutting Horse Association](#) schedule is March 20 in Abbotsford, and Higgins says his horse – which is boarded and trains in Langley – will be ready.

"The horses are in training year-round," he explained.

In addition to the March events locally, the next big competition is the BC Maturity, set for June 30 in Kamloops.

No matter how the coming season goes, Higgins admits he's already "lived his dream" of competing at the world championships last November in Fort Worth, Texas.

In Fort Worth, Higgins and Ernie – whom Higgins purchased and moved to Canada from Texas – competed in two amateur divisions, and just missed moving onto semifinals in one competition.

"It was a huge achievement for my first time showing in such a prestigious event," Higgins said, who called owning a horse "a lifelong dream" and competing in cutting "checks a box on my bucket list."

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