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NEWS RELEASE

VARINI STOPS BEANE STREAK AT 4 IN WCBC

Calgary – They're often called blacksmiths because they work with iron. They usually call themselves farriers or horseshoers. Whatever you call them, David Varini of Dalry, Ayrshire, Scotland is the 2013 World Champion.

He came to the Stampede's World Championship Blacksmiths' Competition presented by Mustad in 2004, Varini remembers, and then didn't return until 2008. That year, he was Reserve Champion. From then on, says the 34-year old professional farrier, "It's become a bit of an obsession with me – to take it one step further and win it. I feel more relief than joy at the moment."

Between that runnerup finish in 2008, and this year's victory, Varini's best outcome at Stampede was third last year. He did achieve a measure of success by being on the winning Four-Man Team in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

"I don't do lots of competitions every year," Varini says. "The ones I do mean a lot to me so I put in quite a lot of prep time. For three months prior to Stampede, I pretty much spend my life between my anvil and my forge. I finish my day work and then it's practice, practice, practice."

Varini's win in this year's WCBC presented by Mustad snaps a streak of four consecutive victories by Englishman Steven Beane of Northallerton, Yorkshire. Beane was one of the five competitors who made it to Sunday's final round and finished fourth.

Three strenuous days at Heritage Park with smiths earning points in ten different classes narrowed the field of 62 entrants from 15 countries down to ten. The ten semi-finalists moved to the Big Top on Sunday morning and were each tasked with shoeing the front feet of a randomly-selected horse in no more than an hour. After a break to check their equipment and catch their breath, the five finalists then had to shoe the back feet of that same horse.

Judges James Blurton of Wales and Canadian Nathan Powell assessed each farrier's work on the quality of shoe forging, finish and nail placement as well as preparation and balance of the horses' feet in a blind judging process.

Reserve Champion, or runnerup, in the WCBC presented by Mustad was Matthew Randles of Biddulph, Staffordshire, England in only his second visit to the Stampede. Randles, who also won the shoeing and forging competitions, said, "I thought it was going well. It's an amazing feeling. I can't believe it. It's a pleasure to compete against these guys. There are some top guys here – serious guys."

Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Limited

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Grant Moon of Wales, the only five-time WCBC winner, was third this year and took the best-shod title. Beane was fourth and Englishman Jonathan Nunn fifth. Semi-finalists who did not make the final were Jack Casserly of England, Jesper Eriksson of Sweden, Scotland's Devin Crerar – who was named Rookie of the Year and Englishmen David Smith and Nigel Fennell.

The Four Man Team Draft championship presented by Anderson Ranch went to the quartet of Nunn, Moon, Eriksson and Askel Vibe of Norway.

"In spite of a rough start, we recovered strong," commented Erik Swanby, chair of the Stampede Blacksmith committee. "We just put our heads down and went."

"Anybody in the top ten or fifteen could have won this year," Varini noted. "It's quite a humbling experience to get to the top. I'm sure, when things settle down a little bit, I'll be able to look at it and enjoy it more."

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The Stampede will be webcasting all events being held in the Big Top this year. Visit <http://ag.calgarystampede.com/big-top-ustream> to see live streaming of action from the Big Top.

Agrium Western Event Centre

Scheduled for completion before the 2014 10-day Stampede, the Agrium Western Event Centre is a state-of-the-art facility for western events and agriculture education, exhibition and industry in southern Alberta. Designed to form a lasting connection between urban and rural communities, it will host an engaging, globally-focused educational program called Journey 2050, and it will play a central role in making the Calgary Stampede a year-round gathering place. For more information visit <http://corporate.calgarystampede.com/about/park-development/agrium-western-event-centre/>

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About the Calgary Stampede



As we enter our second century, the Calgary Stampede celebrates the people, the animals, the land, the traditions and the values that make up the unique spirit of the west. The Calgary Stampede contributes to the quality of life in Calgary and southern Alberta through our world-renowned 10-day Stampede, year-round facilities, western events and several youth and agriculture programs. Exemplifying the theme We're Greatest Together; we are a volunteer-supported, not-for-profit community organization that preserves and promotes western heritage and values. All revenue is reinvested into Calgary Stampede programs and facilities.

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