The Prairie Classic, held at the Oklahoma City Fairgrounds, was a successful horse show thanks to the Kansas Quarter Horse Association. The numbers were large and there were points to be earned in every age division. However, to one person this show was much more than your typical quarter horse event, this was the first time they would ever compete in a horse show.

At the age of 17 most youth riders have been competing with their horses for years, some even having world titles to their name. To Oklahoma City native, April Freeland, the story only begins at 17. With a little help from her 4-year-old quarter horse, Gota Rolex On Mpulse, the two competed in the novice youth showmanship for the first time. Although she didn’t hear her name called she couldn’t have been happier with her horse showing debut.

“I was able to live a dream that I never thought would come true. When I was getting ready to show, my nerves started to get to me,” April explained. “Thanks to a small pep talk from my trainer, I was able to put the focus back on Benji and myself. I now know what to improve on for next time.”

April first learned about the American Quarter Horse Association when she purchased her first horse. “When I bought my first horse, he came with papers and after that I knew that I wanted to show on the quarter horse circuit.” After purchasing her horse April met some friends that owned quarter horses as well. Thanks to her friends she was able to meet up with her current trainer, and Professional Horseman, Wes Wetherell, which was the start of a long journey to the show pen.

According to April the versatility of the quarter horse made showing them so appealing. “Right now I am showing novice youth showmanship, but my horse is almost ready for the western pleasure. We also found out recently he loves trail poles,” April said. “I think that is what really made me want to show quarter horses, they can do so many different events. I am constantly learning new things.”

The versatility of the horse wasn’t the only thing that attracted April to competing at AQHA events, the hospitality of everyone at the show was another reason April wanted to continue showing. “Everyone at the Prairie Classic was kind to me. When someone found out it was my first time to ever show a horse they were so welcoming. Just knowing how supportive everyone was, regardless of what barn they were in, really made me look forward to showing.”

Although the Prairie Classic was April’s first horse show, she is setting her goals high. Aiming to qualify for one of the World Championship shows AQHA offers is the next thing she would like to accomplish with her horse, Benji. “The one thing I keep telling myself is to do my best, have goals and dream big.”