

By Amy Wilson

A KID'S HORSE

Coleman Proctor's junior rodeo horse turned out to be his best bet at the WNFR.

On their way to try a 3-year-old gelding, Coleman Proctor's dad gave him these instructions:

"Listen, son, we're going to go look at this horse. I don't want you saying that we have to have him. I don't want you saying that you love him, because you don't love him and we don't have to have him."

They were looking for a new horse to replace the horse Proctor had learned to rope on, but had lost in his dad's divorce settlement. "That just broke my heart as a little kid," Proctor said. "My dad promised me—I'll never forget it—that he'd buy me a better one."

Proctor was only 12 years old, and after riding the new prospect named Dude Booger Bear for as long as they would let him, Proctor's dad waved him over and asked what he thought. In front of the current owners, Proctor said, "Dad, I love him. We have to have him!"

He remembers the bay roan being a great match from the beginning.

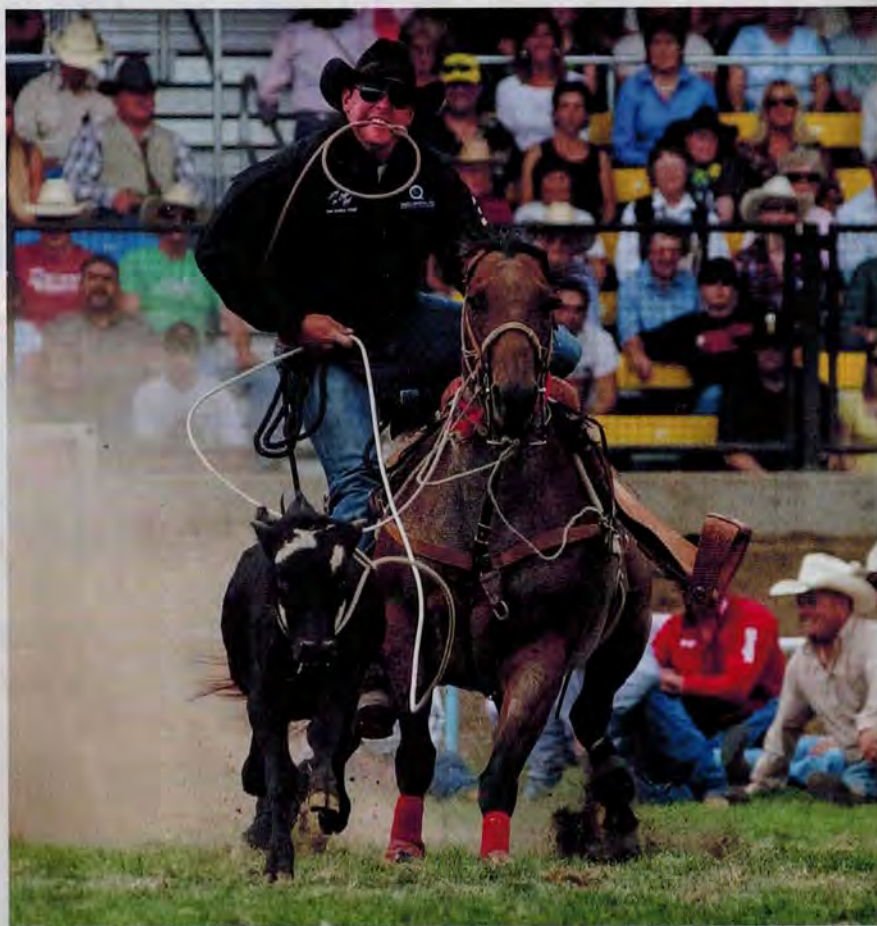
"He was my size—I was a little kid and he was little," Proctor said.

He was so little—about 14.1 hands—that Proctor's dad was unsure if he had made a good purchase.

"We leave there and my dad said, 'Son, we either just bought a really expensive pony, or a real cheap horse.'"

Proctor had just gotten out of school for the summer, and "Booger" became his only form of transportation.

"Every day I would ride him down to this little convenience store about a mile from my house. I'd tie him up to the swing



DAN HUBBELL PHOTO

Jerome Schneeberger rides Coleman Proctor's NFR head horse, Booger, at the Pendleton Round-Up short round.

set and get him a bucket of water, and then I go in and get a couple of cheeseburgers. Then I'd ride him home later."

And as you can imagine, those rides home on the back roads near Miami, Okla., involved reenacting lots of Lonesome Dove scenes. Proctor also started roping the dummy, lead steer and donkey on him; and 30 days later, they went to their first junior rodeo. "He turned 4 June 24 in Welch, Okla., at his first kid rodeo, and he hasn't been out of the trailer since really," Proctor said.

In fact, Proctor won his first rodeo buckle on Booger, heeling for Jake Long,

"And my first two NFR buckles are heading for Jake on Booger," Proctor said. "It's neat for me because that horse and I grew up together from the time I was 12. Literally we've been everywhere together."

Booger is now 21 years old (Proctor jokes that he wants the extra six months so he goes by his actual birthday rather than Jan. 1.), so he wasn't planning to take him to Las Vegas this year.

"When it got time to leave, I couldn't help but load him," the two-time WNFR qualifier said. "I hadn't even ran a steer on him. The only time I had actually rode him was when he got out in the yard while I was home and I jumped on him bareback and rode him back to the barn."

Proctor had only ridden him at two Pro Rodeos in 2015—Rapid City and Omaha. Like Proctor has come to expect, Booger answered when he decided to get on him part way through the WNFR, and they were 4.0 to split the win in round five.

"He's going to do whatever it takes to get his job done. To me, that's what makes him such a winner," Proctor said.

BOOGER BY COLEMAN PROCTOR

FEED: Total Equine, alfalfa and turned out on grass

SUPPLEMENTS: None

BIT: Anything...sometimes a little sliding chain gag

SADDLE: Coats **SADDLE PAD:** CSI **LEG GEAR:** Iconoclast

OTHER: Soft Ride Boots and Back On Track blanket and wraps

VET THERAPIES: Coffin joints injected as needed