



College National Finals Rodeo



For close to 30 years Mr. J.S. Wooten has provided the rodeo team travel money to attend the College National Finals Rodeo in various locations throughout the country: Bozeman, Montana, Rapid City, South Dakota and Casper, Wyoming.

By finishing in second place in the Ozark Region, both the men's and women's teams qualified for the College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR) in Casper, Wyoming in June. "We have a very good group of men and women going to the College Finals," declared Coach Luthi. "They are very talented and I expect them to do well. Our game plan will be the same as always, to just strive to do the best we can with what we have and let the chips fall where they may. I hope everyone will keep us in their prayers, for the Good Lord to help us to relax and do our best."

Several cowgirls qualified to represent UT Martin at the CNFR. Chelsie McDade will battle for the championship in the goat tying. Heather Moore, Katie Brown and Dacia Horne will compete for the barrel racing title.

The cowboys representing UTM in Casper will be Clark Adcock who qualified in the tie down roping and as a heeler in the team roping. His partner in the team roping will be Ben Walker as the header. Jordan Thrasher will compete for the tie down roping championship. In the saddle bronc riding, Ty Hughston qualified to ride at the CNFR. Clay Mitchell will head and John Alley will heel as they vie to win the buckle in the team roping competition.

The CNFR will begin on Sunday, June 10th. There will be regular updates on the UTM Rodeo facebook page. You can also find articles at www.utmsports.com and click on rodeo.



Saddle Bronc Rider Ty Hughston.



Matt Smith winning the bull riding at UT Martin.

Spring Recap



Austin Duckett winning the Steer Wrestling at UT Martin.



Bull Riding - Heath Simpson.



Barrel Race - Kristie Alsobrooks.

The 2012 spring rodeo season concluded with the men's and women's teams finishing second in the final Ozark Regional standings. That qualifies both teams to compete at the College National Finals Rodeo (CNFR), in Casper, Wyoming in June. According to Coach Luthi, "We had quite a few kids step up for us this year. I felt we really battled and competed hard all year."

Spring Team Results

- Cossatot Community College - Men 5th and Women 2nd
- Univ of Arkansas at Monticello - Men 1st and Women 2nd
- UT Martin - Men 2nd and Women 1st
- Northwest Mississippi #1 - Men 6th and Women 2nd
- Northwest Mississippi #2 - Men 1st and Women 2nd

Men's Regional Standings

- Tyler Waltz – 5th in bareback riding and 6th in bull riding
- Ty Hughston – 3rd in saddle bronc riding
- Matt Smith – 7th in bull riding
- Jordan Thrasher – 2nd tie down roping
- Clark Adcock - 2nd in the All-Around, 2nd as heeler, 11 in steer wrestling and 11th in tie down roping
- John Alley – 5th in All-Around, 3rd as heeler, 13th in tie down roping and 8th in steer wrestling
- Ben Walker – 7th in All-Around and 10th in tie down roping
2nd Place Header
- Clay Mitchell was 3rd as a header in the team roping
- Austin Duckett split 8th in the steer wrestling
- Robert Joyce was 12th in the steer wrestling

Women's Regional Standings

- Chelsie McDade - 1st in the goat tying
- Heather Moore – 2nd in barrel racing
- Katie Brown – 4th barrel racing
- Dacia Horne – 8th barrel racing
- Tawnie Foster – 11th barrel racing
- Christy Cunningham - 15th barrel racing

Looking back on the season Coach Luthi explained, "Both teams had a good spring, I felt all of our people kept good attitudes and worked to make the best runs and rides they could every time they competed. You cannot ask for much more than that. With the talent we have, as long as we can keep them working hard and striving to do their best we will have a lot more good things happen than bad. I am thankful we are blessed to have such a great group."

"Perfect Practice Makes Perfect"

Karoline (Pershell) Null, '03

This is an outline of her speech to the UTM Development Committee on April 13, 2012.

Thank you again for having me. I still definitely have the rodeo mentality. Len Solomon asked if I would speak to you on how I got into bull riding, on my time at UTM and what I took away from it, and of course why I decided to come back to Martin. I told Len I would check my schedule and get back to her.

Then she mentioned there would be food, and I told her she could plan on me being there.

How I got into bull riding.

I grew up training and showing horses to make money in the summers. When I got to Saint Mary's, the all women's part to Notre Dame, two brothers from Wyoming had just started a rodeo club team. I didn't know anything about rodeo, but I joined thinking I would ride saddle broncs because I thought it would be most like breaking out young horses. There was one practice pen about an hour away so I drove out there and paid my fee. I had no gear, no idea what I was supposed to

do, and was getting fed up with standing there politely when these 3 obnoxious, bull-headed toothless, chaw-spitting cowboy wannabes came over, got everybody to watch and laughed and said they didn't do horses at this pen only bulls. Well, the only difference between them and me was that I didn't dip. I could be stupid and stubborn and obnoxious, so I said "I knew that." So never having planned to get on a bull in my life, I was getting on 5 minutes later.

I would love to say that I was a natural and from that first ride I knew I would be a bull rider. But the only thing that ride showed was that I had a natural talent for hitting the ground with style. Somewhere between wondering which way was up and if that loud crashing noise came from my body hitting the gate, I remember thinking "this is the coolest thing I have ever done."

Now remember, I do math for a living. So my list of "coolest things I have ever done" is probably pretty short. It was easy to move to the number one slot.

I pursued bull riding on my own for about another year, competing in a handful of rodeos, including

the one here at UTM, and I decided I needed to get some professional help for my bull riding addiction, and UTM had a fantastic rodeo program, so I decided to transfer down here. I don't exactly remember, but I think the conversation with my parents went something like:

"Mom, Dad, I want to leave my full-ride academic scholarship at a private women's university to attend a school you have never heard of in a state you have never visited to pursue something I am not very good at."

I may be paraphrasing, but I think my parents said something like "Karoline, that is the smartest decision you have ever made."

And it turns out they were right.

My time at UTM and what I took away from it

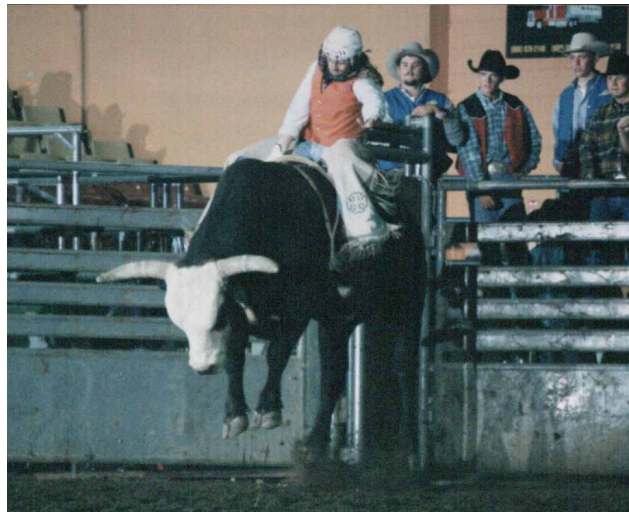
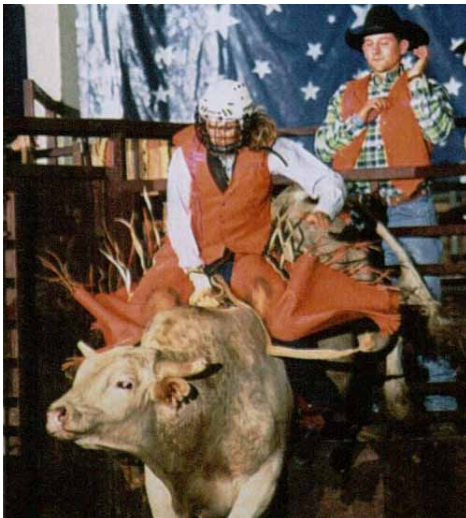
When Len asked me to speak about my time at UTM I immediately thought of all of the things I learned which anyone with a lick of common sense ought to have known ahead of time, like don't make fun of the guy holding the cattle prod. And I learned a lot about how tough I really was, like that I could take getting stung

by 3 cattle prods at the same time, but it would be 15 minutes before I could make my leg work to chase down Chad, Andy and Curtis and whip their butts, but these are the obvious ones, which probably everyone knows. What surprises me are the things that I thought were obvious to everyone, but they're not.

1) There is no substitute for hard work.

I learned this at many levels. First, was that I was slightly an outsider. And I don't mean because I was a girl riding bulls, but I mean because I was a loud-mouthed yankee. Whatever the reason, men like Coach Luthi had seen it all and heard it all, and he wasn't so sure he wanted to deal with me and any potential danger I could put myself in. I vowed when I got here to be the hardest worker on the team, and not to show off, but so that I could be the best Karoline I could be, which meant not only being the hardest worker at the barn and at the practice pen (where everybody could see me), but to be the hardest worker when no one else was watching, when only I would know: in the classroom, at the gym, when watching practice

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Karoline (Pershell) Null, PhD has to be one of the most amazing student-athletes to have been a part of the UT Martin Rodeo team. She graduated from UT Martin in 2003, from Rice University in 2006, and received her doctorate there in 2009. She is now a professor at UTM in the math department.

"I would have to say Karoline was one of my biggest fears as a coach, but turned out to be one of the best surprises I've had coaching," acknowledged Coach Luthi. "She didn't contribute as much as some in the arena but she contributed in more ways outside of the arena that you can count. I am proud she was a part of the UTM Rodeo program."

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tapes. I was the hardest worker (although if you know some of my rodeo compatriots, maybe it wasn't really that steep of competition) and Coach finally allowed me start getting on in practice, and I also won Coach's Bumble Bee award my last year here.

There is no magic pill and there are no fairy godmothers. I think many people may have at sometime in their lives kept a workout journal or a diet journal. And did you ever just write 30 minutes on the treadmill, when it was really 27? Or say you had a burger when it was a burger AND fries? Regardless of what you might write down, your body keeps its own journal. And guess what? Bulls don't read. In rodeo you are only judged on what you can do in 8 seconds. But you prepare for your lifetime so that you are ready for those 8 seconds.

This leads me to the second thing I wanted to mention that I really learned while at UTM, and that is

2) "Practice makes perfect" is wrong

I practiced before I came to UTM. I asked every yahoo, has-been, wanna-be bull rider what I should do to train and then I did it with fervor. And only when I came to UTM did I stop beating my head against a wall and actually make progress.

From now on, please never tell anyone that "Practice makes perfect." It should be "Perfect practice makes perfect." If you keep practicing the wrong thing, you get really good at doing the wrong thing.

The terrible thing is, when you ask someone for their opinion, they give it to you. I didn't step back and assess my sources. I asked washed-up has-beens about their career paths, and then I tried to follow in their footsteps because I was too intimidated by the guys that were really good. I didn't realize that until I got here and got good information, solid techniques and training tips. I learned to seek out the people that I could learn something from and squeeze them for every bit of information so that I could work on my "perfect practice."

3) "Why are you so weird?"

Len asked me a few months ago if I would speak, and of course I agreed for the free food, but I wasn't sure what I had learned from rodeo, and I had been reflecting hard on how it has shaped who I am, and for a long while I was drawing a blank.

I had pushed all of this to the backburner because my mother came to visit a few weeks, but it turns out my brain had been marinating in this question the whole time. My mom was helping me paint my deck and we were each in our own thoughts, when she turned to me and said "Why are you so weird?"

And of course I am thinking, "Whatever the reason, every psychologist will agree it is your fault," but when I opened my mouth that is not what came out, **EVEN THOUGH THAT** is the type of sarcastic remark I was conscious of thinking. Instead, I said "Because I have no fear of failure."

The words completely surprised me, but she seemed to accept that answer and went back to painting. And so for the past 3 weeks I have been ruminating on that phrase and trying to understand how it has made me who I am, and how it influences where I am now and where I am going.

I have no fear of failure. I don't fear looking silly in front of strangers, I don't let rejection letters cripple me, and while I always want to be my best, I don't put off trying something just because I am not "perfect yet."

I have no fear of failure. I do fear regret, the feeling of looking back and wondering how it would have been different if you had just tried harder.

Of course I have my resume, but I also think everyone should keep an anti-resume, the list of all of the things that you have tried and failed at. If your anti-resume isn't as long as your resume, then you are playing it safe, working inside your comfort zone, and you have stopped asking yourself "I wonder if I could..."

The reason I chose to come back to UTM is because—all of the

way up the chain: my department head, my dean, the vice chancellor for faculty and the chancellor—all clearly want me to be the best me I can be. They understand how that will contribute to a better UTM, more so than merely wanting to see me crank out math research papers in an obscure field of mathematics that only 6 people in the world will understand, like would be the expectation at other universities.

I tend to keep a lot of irons in the fire, some which will result in another line on my anti-resume, but I have had several things come to fruition lately, which Len asked me to mention. Last summer I received a small NSF grant where I was the Principal Investigator and we examined efficiency of hydrogen fuel cells and I oversaw one student. I applied to be part of a National Science Foundation Workshop on increasing undergraduate research at smaller institutions and I was accepted. I will be in Baltimore for a week this June at that conference.

And then about a week later, I heard back from Qingdao University in China, and I was

invited to teach Mathematics there this summer, so I will be gone June 15-Aug 15 in China.

And then about a week later, I heard back from the William J. Fulbright Committee and the US Department of State and I was accepted as a Fulbright Scholar and I will be teaching mathematics in India next year, likely in the Spring.

So...I really don't want to go to Baltimore anymore, but I have already committed. I have big plans for how each of these can impact my students here in Martin, and now I just need to see them through.

Despite what else I have gone and been successful at or will do, I need to say that my minimal success in rodeo was some of the most hard fought and meaningful to me. I believe that the work ethic I developed while pursuing dreams that just didn't mesh with my natural athletic ability has been central to my success in other areas of my life. I hope that rodeo continues to be that source of inspiration for many future students for them to become the best that they can be as well.

UT Martin Rodeo Week A Success


The UTM home rodeo was an exciting finish to "Rodeo Week" in Martin. The crowds were fantastic each night and we again set attendance records for the greatest number of spectators on a Friday night and the biggest overall turnout during the three days of the rodeo. For the seventh year in a row UT Martin was awarded "Rodeo of the Year" voted on by the Ozark Region coaches and contestants. The women's team won the rodeo and the men's team missed first by just a few points and finished second.

Universal Rodeo Company, owned by Mark Johnson, brought bucking stock for the 10th year and they did not disappoint. Only one bull was ridden for 8 second all weekend, by UTM cowboy Matt Smith. Coach Luthi commented, "Mark has a lot of good young bucking horses and bulls right now with a bright future".

Each year the rodeo team selects an honorary "Team Captain". This is awarded to the individual the team members feel has gone to great lengths to help and support the team. This year the buckle was given to David Pruitt, a former UTM rodeo cowboy.

"We really felt blessed for all the help and support we received from the rodeo booster club, the athletic department, the community, and our kids and their parents to help the rodeo run so smoothly. I was overwhelmed by the crowds and am thankful for everyone who attended and volunteered. We couldn't possibly have such a quality rodeo without all the sponsors and support"

Remember this handout....



Why Don't They Feel the Pressure?

A most significant and surprising finding of athletes was that mentally tough competitors *do not* play well under pressure — not even superstars. Skillful competitors play well in pressure

situations *precisely because* they have eliminated the pressure.

If you can remember one point that would help you the most, it would be:

Pressure is something you put on yourself.

The only difference between rodeoing competitively and rodeoing for fun is *pressure*. For lots of athletes, rodeoing for fun is easy; rodeoing competitively is too much like work.

The *only* difference is the difference *you* make of it in your head!

Thoughts That Produce Pressure

- What if I don't do well?!
- What if I blow it, I'll never be the same.
- The pressure is awesome!
- I'll never live it down if I lose.
- Everything is on the line!
- If I fail, I'll drop from second place to tenth.
- Everyone is going to ask me why I didn't win.
- If I don't win I'm broke.

Thoughts That Reduce Pressure

- I'm going to do the best I can and let the cards fall where they may.
- I'm going to focus on doing my job the best I know how.
- I'm going to have a heck of a lot of fun out there.
- Pressure is something I put on myself.
- Winning and losing is for the fans; I simply perform.
- I love tough situations; the tougher the situation, the better I perform.
- I'm going to be OK - no matter what.
- I'm not going to focus on winning. I'm going to focus on giving my best effort.

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E05-4105-00-008-12