

# START TO FINISH WITH KIM THOMAS

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We are going to go through the entire barrel pattern starting with the alleyway all the way to the run home. It is simpler to break it down because each step and approach affects the next. One mistake can make the difference in the next part of the run, a difference in getting to the pay window or not. So here we go!

I am going to approach this from a young horse's standpoint, but it will work on any horse. Assuming of course your horse is well broke, meaning he knows his leads, stops and backs up well, side passes, and you have control over his body, then you are ready to start.

First, check out the arena--the distance from the alley to the timer and from the timer to the first. How long is the alley? Depending on if you have a free runner or a turny horse will decide where you start to let your horse run.

I always start on the side of the alley that my horse runs the pattern, right side for the right-handed horse, left side for left-handed.

This helps your horse to start on the correct lead. Keeping forward motion I start towards the alley at a trot, breaking to a lope, then allowing him to run at the point I have decided he needs to start, insuring I am approaching the turn at a speed my horse can handle.

Keeping your horse confident and secure requires that you teach him what you expect from him. So make your practice times relaxed, keeping him under control. Remember, perfect practice makes perfect.

Next time: The approach to the first barrel and the turn.



*Kim Thomas*

## **Accomplished Rider & Trainer:**

1992 OKC Futurity World Champion  
Numerous futurity & derby championships & placings  
1992 Divisional Tour Champion  
FCWPRA State Champion  
WPRA Gold Card member  
NBHA member since its inception in 1992  
NBHA FL-04 1D Champion  
10 time SE PRCA Circuit Qualifier  
3 time Prairie Circuit Qualifier  
Dodge National Circuit Qualifier  
Qualified for finals in most major rodeos including Denver, San Antonio, Houston, Reno & Calgary  
Finals qualifier in All American Quarter Horse Show, AQHA World Show & other major events  
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