

'Working On The Goldmine'

by **Lacey Kuschel**

BHH visited with Lacey Kuschel and found she is currently ranked 2nd in MBRA Rodeo Standings; 2nd in NRF Tour Standings; and 1st in WPRa World Futurity Standings. She is always mounted on some great horses and is becoming an accomplished trainer in her own right. Join us to learn more about Lacey....



Lacey grew up in Nimrod, MN with parents, Lonnie and Betsy Kuschel. She started riding at age 2! Her pony was her babysitter—"my Mom would lead him off her horse and go check cattle". Her Mom taught her how to show at all the 4H events. Lacey started competing in Little Britches rodeos around age 12 and moved on to High School Rodeo, amateur open rodeos and then got her WPRa permit as soon as she turned 18. She started the futurity game around 2004.

Lacey now lives in Sebeka, MN with boyfriend Matt Pojanowski, who starts all of her young horses. The last horse I bought started by someone else was American Jet Strip, aka "AJ", and he still needed to go through the seasoning process. Since I purchased him 15 years ago, every horse I've competed on, I've trained.

What most people don't know about Lacey:

"I boxed Golden Gloves for 4 years, and went to National High School Rodeo finals in goat tying!"

Other interests:

"I'd love to have a garden next year, and I'm a big arts and crafts person. I crochet afghans, hats, bags, etc."

MY THOUGHTS ON TRAINING

I get my horses super broke before they start seeing the pattern. If I have to use more than pinky pressure on the reins, they're not ready. Our horses also have other jobs. They follow cattle, pasture doctor calves and so on. My horses may not be ready as soon as most trainers, because I really take my time, but they stay sane. I don't like gate sour horses--they have to like their job, so I do a TON of slow work and do things other than work them on the pattern. ~**TURNING STYLE**...4-wheel drive--I feel that they handle ground better and stay sound. ~**START TO FINISH**...Ideally, trotting the pattern as a 2 yr old, loping at 3, cruising through at 4 and starting to haul to barrel races to exhibition so they're ready to roll at 5 yrs. ~**GAME PLAN**...I never really have much of a game plan...it's hard in my area to really get a horse seasoned before they start entering futurities because of the weather and the travel distance to barrel races. I try to exhibition them as 4 yr olds, and when December hits, I try to get to a couple of barrel races every month. *They tell me, when they're ready.*



WHAT I “GET” TO RIDE

I own 2 horses and I take in outside training horses in the winter for other people. I ride 5-8 horses per day--just depends on what I have in for outside horses. I ride whatever is brought to me, so *I don't get to go out and hand-pick prospects*. I've had good luck with Moon Lark horses, but they are not for everyone. I like to see Tinys Gay on a pedigree, and I really like the Ninety Nine Goldmine horses. They are athletic and level headed.

“BREAK THE MONOTONY”

I don't have a set daily program that I do every day. I try to change it up so that my horses don't get bored. For my finished horses, I usually just trot and lope around a big pasture. They only see the pattern if I feel they are dull or I have an issue to address. The young horses are trotted and loped in circles, then either worked on the pattern or on stations. Ideally they get to ride outside and be horses once a week just to break the monotony. Or, I work them on the pole pattern to really get their shoulders freed up.

~BARREL RACING TIP...

Don't overlook your slow work. If your horse doesn't have a brain going through the gate it's hard to get them to focus on your cues.

“Be willing to put in the time--very rarely does it ever come easy.”

CURRENT WINNING HORSE...

Western Goldmine aka “Goldmine” is a 2008 sorrel gelding, by Ninety Nine Goldmine out of Leggy Lark (Moon Lark). This is his first competition year—he came to the ranch as a 2 yr old with about 10 rides. The rest of his training was by me. He runs around barrels but stays upright and on top of the ground so I think he'll have a great career as a rodeo horse. He is a Moon Lark bred horse so he can have epic flake-out moments that you just have to let go or they hold on to it. They definitely have trigger points. But, he's a great ranch horse and good minded, smooth running and doesn't beat me up. Wins include LD Ranch and Rocking D Futurity Champion, Big J Classic Futurity Reserve Champion, Northern Lights Derby short go qualifier, 5th in average, currently 2nd in NRF Futurity standings and leading WPRA Futurity World standings.



Ups and downs of barrel racing & training..... It's not glamorous by any means. You need to make sure you have a good support team and can handle the emotional roller coaster. Realize that not every horse wants to be a barrel horse and don't take that personally. But...the good horses do make it all worth it.

**“Do your homework and don't take your failures personally.
Horses have minds of their own, and it's impossible to control every variable
at every moment. Never stop learning and don't be afraid to ask for help!”**

FUTURITIES VS. RODEOS

I prefer rodeos because you aren't putting so much pressure on a young horse, the atmosphere is exciting, and you get to be at a different place almost every night. For futurities...I hold my horses until they are 5, everything up here is for 5 yr olds--they are more mature, and because of my location, it's hard to have a horse ready at 4, unless you can go south for the winter.

Favorite arenas... I like any arena I win money in! I do prefer bigger arenas though, because training and ability are more on display. .

*Is there any big event you have not won and would like to do so some day....*I could list every major pro rodeo in the country...*Changes you'd like to see...*Each producer and association has their own set of rules, and I think for the most part, they are fair to all who enter. Regarding drug testing, I do agree that there are a lot of unscrupulous actions taking place and they need to be regulated. But some policies have been taken too far regarding drugs that are not allowed, and they need to focus on the real problem.

*Warm up pre-race.....*I just make sure they get to trot and lope until they are warm and loose. Some I will breeze lightly just to get them thinking about running.

*Keeping them fresh for hauling....*The biggest thing I do is try to set up a good sized pen so they can lie down, roll, and just move around. If I am at an event where I have to stall and they're on cement, I keep them tied to the trailer so they don't stand on that concrete all day. I put up fans if they're in stalls during warm weather also.

PERSONAL LIKES

I prefer the older Allen Ranch saddles, and the Shilohs. I do like to use a blanket under my pads--most pads are an investment and using a blanket underneath makes that pad last for years. Most of my horses get a Steel Lite Rim on the front and a plain steel shoe on the back. If it is a big horse, maybe steel Eventers. Very rarely do I use an aluminum shoe, they tend to wear down too fast.

*Preferred bits....*I usually start in a smooth-mouth D ring with some weight, then move to a twisted D. I generally end up with a medium shank bit that has either a 3 piece twisted or chain mouth. I don't use a warm up bit separate from my running bit...my horses have a "business" bit and a "play" bit. If they have the business bit on they are expected to go to work, and the play bit is for trail rides, sorting cattle, outside conditioning, etc. If I had to limit myself to 3 bits, they would be a twisted D ring, and short shank Ed Wright, and a medium shank Ed Wright, both with the gag.

*Preferred grain & hay/supplements...*Most get a grass/alfalfa blend hay, and we have our own feed blended at the mill. If I were to feed a bagged feed, I prefer Purina Ultium. If I have an older horse or one that shows signs of arthritis, they get a Polyglycan shot once a month and Actiflex. I find that Daily Gold from Redmund Equine is an outstanding supplement for horses prone to ulcers. For a nervous horse, Keep Cool from Silver Lining Herbs has worked great for me, but by using the Daily Gold I've cut down on the need to use a calming Supplement. Animal Element In The Zone paste is another good product to use at an event to help with focus. I haven't ever really had the need to use therapies. I keep my horses very fit, stretched out and adjusted and I find that I have very few issues. If needed, I may use Back on Track or PHT gear over Sore No More liniment.

GOALS.... Right now I'd like to finish out this year's futurity season strong, and hopefully get these young horses rodeo seasoned next year. Next year I'll be focusing on qualifying for WPRA GLCF, although I'm sure I'll run some derbies too.

GIVING THANKS..... I'd like to thank Benji Belts and Trouble Maker Custom Leather for keeping myself and horses looking sharp. Also, there are people who have supported me emotionally when I needed it the most. You know who you are!

ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....2013 LD Ranch Futurity Champion; Rocking D Futurity Champion; JJ Classic Breeder's Incentive Futurity Champion; Big J Barrel Bash Futurity Reserve Champion; Northern Lights Derby Short-Go Qualifier, 5th in Average; Placed in Fargo, ND, Hampton, IA, and Iron River, MI Pro Rodeos; currently ranked 2nd in MBRA Rodeo Standings; 2nd in NRF Tour Standings; and 1st in WPRA World Futurity Standings.



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