

# The Team Roping Journal's EXTRA

JANUARY/2020

Welcome to  
*Team Roping Journal's*  
New monthly digital magazine

JUNIOR  
NOGUEIRA





**ONE ON ONE with Chelsea Shaffer**



# ONE ON ONE

## WITH JUNIOR NOGUEIRA

### Living the American Dream

**What year did you come to the United States, and what was your first impression?**

**JN:** I came to the US in maybe 2006 or 2007 the first time. I came over with a friend. I was so nervous—I'd always dreamed of coming to the US. When that airplane landed in Dallas, my whole body got cold, and I was like MAN I'm in the United States! I was so excited. It was a dream. I found Robbie Schroeder and came back to work for him for six months. I went home and trained horses, but I always had the dream to try to rodeo one year and make the NFR. I wanted to see just for one year how it would be to rodeo. I had friends who came and tried it, and I listened to their stories about driving and living in a horse trailer and trying to make the top 15. God has better plans, though, so when I came in 2013 a few friends in Arizona introduced me to Jake Barnes, and that's how everything started.

**Your father (Lucinei) was a great calf-roper in Brazil, but he had a heart attack and you lost him when you were just 5.**

**JN:** Yes, my father (Lucinei) was an all-around cowboy who loved to rope calves. One day he rode into the box to rope a calf on his best horse. He talked to his best friend as he was riding in the box. He had a heart attack and died right there on his horse.

**Your name shows up in official results as Junior Nogueira, but I've seen Testa as part of your name also. Tell me about that.**

**JN:** Testa was my father's nickname. Now it's my nickname, too. When my dad was a boy he was playing soccer and

scored a goal with his forehead. Testa means forehead in Portuguese.

**How old were you when you started roping?**

**JN:** I started roping with my daddy when I was 4. He would rope a steer, dally and stop him. Then a guy would put me and my pony into position. I missed the very first steer. But I put a trap down there and roped the second steer by two feet. I remember that it was a yellow steer with big horns.

**What lessons did your time with Jake Barnes teach you?**

**JN:** Shoot—I learned everything. Every time I have a problem I still call him. I send him my runs, we text. He's like my dad. I'm still learning about everything, the roping, the lifestyle. I talk to him all the time. He checks on me and I learned how to speak English from him. But the best thing he does is hard work, and knowing he gives everything to do what he says he'll do. He's a fighter. He works until it's done and he never slows down. He's also smart, too. He tells stories about the past, and he'll tell you the truth no matter what. Whether it hurts or not, he'll tell you the truth.

**How long have you roped with Kaleb Driggers, and what's the best part of your partnership with Kaleb?**

**JN:** Since 2016. Partnership is like being married. Kaleb has changed a lot as a professional since I got here in the US. He's only getting better and better. He's a professional. We've done good since we've roped together, and we're a great team. He's growing up and so am I. We're working hard at it, and we're trying to get close to God. That's the

best thing. We've had good and bad moments together. The relationship is like a marriage. We have to respect each other no matter. When you're a team, you work together. Kaleb has a good attitude. He doesn't get sad, and he doesn't get down. All the great guys are like that. I think Kaleb is the best header by far in the sport.

**You're the best of the best, but when you show up at a jackpot and look around, you've got to appreciate how tough it still is.**

**JN:** Everybody is roping just so good. If you don't work and change, you won't do good. It's so awesome to see how the sport is going. It's outstanding. It's been a blessing just to be part of it and to see the change. You see at the jackpots, you can't just catch all the steers. You have to go at them. Everybody knows how to rope and they rope fast. Even the older guys, they rope better now than they ever have and it's not easy to get past anyone.

#### { Vital Stats }

AGE: 29

NFR  
QUALIFICATIONS:  
6

WORLD TITLES:  
1 (All-Around, 2016)

HOME:  
Presidente Prudente, Brazil

MAIN MOUNTS:  
Hali, GreenCard and Timon



# finding strength

Where all-around world champ Junior Nogueira finds his confidence.

Rodeo can be hard, and I get to struggling. I get tired, but I think the only way to overcome that is to have faith. I get my confidence and my strength from God.

It's not easy. We drive every day, and we get caught up thinking about roping all the time. I listen to Jake Barnes and Allen Bach tell me that roping isn't that important, though. They have reminded me that it needs to be God, family, then roping. But when you're roping every day, all you think about is where you're going tomorrow, what horse you're going to ride, what you're going to do, what steer you're going to draw. When it's like that, it's easy to let roping climb and become first in your life. And when roping becomes first, you can probably control it for a little bit, but eventually things will for sure fall apart.

To combat that, when I get up every morning, I talk to my mom. She prays over the phone to me every day. That reminds me what I need to do. Even when I'm mad, I call her. I ask for her blessing. That's our family's culture. It helps me stay focused, and it helps her feel good, too.

I'm not perfect. It's hard. I try hard. I think the deal is, like roping, when you work really hard, you get better at it. Faith is the same. When I'm not working at it, it shows.

We need to be who we are. I sin, and I don't judge. When you're doing good and you're roping good, everybody is watching you. When you're doing bad, everyone is watching you too. I think my actions are the same, too. If I'm doing bad, everyone knows.

I try to be the light instead of the

dark. I like people, and I like to talk to them. I'm not trying to be anybody that I'm not—that's the way I am. The only way I find peace is to do good things for people. Simple little things, like helping someone or saying good morning to a stranger.

This is competition, and it's so hard. But the little, simple things are what can change something for someone else. I think that's what gives me strength.

When I pray before I rope, I ask God to give me strength and good concentration and let His will be done. I pray to do my job. If He wants me to be victorious that day, and if I do my job, that will happen. That's what I'm learning—to let His will be done. I feel like to me, when I win, I'm representing a lot of people. I think about my family, my mom. Marcos (Costa) and I celebrate together. I feel like my team wins. They cheer and pray for you, and that's why I get so happy. ■





## staying hooked

Steers aren't always great—sometimes they run up the rope, sometimes they drag, sometimes they fight their head and go down—and I've had to learn to catch the bad ones just as well as the good ones. In the photos on these next few pages, this steer was going down the arena perfectly, and Kaleb Driggers and I were trying to make a rodeo run on him, but then he went down right in front of my horse, just as I was ready to deliver fast. I had to kick over him and stay in time with him and my horse to finish the run, like you've sometimes got to do in a jackpot or rodeo situation to stay in the average.



**1** Kaleb roped this steer really fast. I didn't want to push my horse so high, but I wanted to get prepared for a faster shot. I was getting prepared to throw fast by watching the steer, picking up my rope, and getting ready to throw. I was getting Green Card in range so I could have a little bit of contact and be ready to throw.



**2** Kaleb had him tight, and he's starting to lower his head. I'm asking Green Card to come back and go inside, and I'm watching the feet already so I'm prepared to throw fast. I'm pushing my horse to position, kicking, and squeezing forward, and everything is perfect for a fast shot. I'm in a really good spot to throw fast. Green Card is locked in. I'm right in the middle of my horse. My plan was to throw on the next hop.



## STEP BY STEP with Junior Nogueira

**3** That steer is starting to go down here, right as I was planning to throw. Everybody in that situation gets panicked, and it's hard not to. But it helps a lot to keep following the steer, no matter what. I started kicking my horse because I knew that steer would go down and then come back up. I wanted to keep swinging and keep following him. I tried to keep my swing very steady and not change anything. If I didn't change anything, I should stay in time with him and keep it all the same.



**4** He's come up and, since I didn't change my swing or my position, he's ready to be heeled on the next hop. I try to train myself to do everything the steer does. I try not to think about it—just react. I have to think before the run but, during the run, I don't think—like riding a bull. If I'd have stopped, I'd have needed to regather everything and go back to him and be behind when he gets back up, and the run would have lost all of its timing. So I want to keep swinging and keep riding, no matter what.



**5** Right here, I'm pulling my slack. It's important to have a good slack to make it easy to dally. I like to make sure my rope is tight on the feet before I come to the saddle horn. A lot of people can rope two feet, but it's easy to slip a lot of legs. But the best guys don't. When I got here, Jake Barnes told me a lot of people can rope really good, but not a lot of guys can keep the feet and not many can rope trotters. So that's something I've really worked on. Here, I'm pulling my slack and I'm sitting square and my feet are square. I've got both hands up, and I'm holding my left hand square to help Green







**How well you ride affects how well you rope.**

**LEARNING CURVE.**

I work hard to stay in good position now, and it's paid off. I've watched the best guys in the world, and they're the ones who ride their horses the best.

**TIMING.**

Once your swing is in time and your right hand is doing all the roping, the rest depends on your horsemanship. It's what makes you win—that's the difference between just roping and winning. When I'm roping my best, every part of my riding and my roping is in sync.

**THE DANCE.**

Riding your horse should be like a dance, done by muscle memory. Every piece of your body needs to work together. Sometimes you can get carried away with pulling on your horse, when really you should use your left hand to put your horse in position and let him work. Keeping your left hand consistent and riding square in the saddle will let you rope just that much better. ■

**Horsemanship  
with Junior Nogueira**