

The Team Roping Journal's

# EXTRA

JULY/2020

*Trey Yates*

2018 NFR AVERAGE  
CHAMPION HEELER



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**ONE ON ONE** with Trey Yates

# ONE ON ONE WITH Trey Yates

*The 2018 NFR average champ and heir to the Yates horse dynasty, Trey Yates has had more than his fair share of great horses. Plus, he's soaked up wisdom from three of the West's greatest horsemen in dad J.D., his Aunt Kelly and Grandpa Dick. **By Chelsea Shaffer***





**CS: What's the greatest horse you've ever rode?**

**TY:** I can't answer that. I've had three great ones that all serve a different purpose. YY started my career when I was a number 4. I won anything from heading in the #9 US Ropings to the Cheyenne Frontier Days on him. Dude, he's quick-footed and I got him from my godparents. He serves a purpose of being quick-footed, stopping hard and strong to the saddle horn. Tux is amazing. Anybody can ride him. He's really easy to catch on. He's easy to dally on, and I'm not sure what else to say about him. He's special because he can take a lot of runs. That's a big part of our operation. Cullen Teller can ride him at Prescott and I can get on him the next day and heel 60 steers on him at a horse show.

**CS: Who's the biggest influence in your life?**

**TY:** My biggest influence has been my grandmother, Jan. She taught me nothing about roping. But she did nothing but raise winners her whole life. Any winning I've done, she's got to take some credit for it because she was a huge part of the operation for the 45 years the Yates family has been doing what they do.

**CS: What's your favorite win?**

**TY:** My next one.

**CS: What rope are you using it right now?**

**TY:** The Powerline Lite HM

**CS: Tell me about your partnership with Matt Sherwood.**

**TY:** He's a really funny guy. He's got his own way of being comical. We have fun and laugh a lot. His ideology about roping is like my dad's, so it's nice to have honest conversations about roping. His priorities are friends and family and that's pretty special. I've never traveled with a guy I've roped with.

**CS: What mistakes would you tell your 20-year-old self not to make?**

**TY:** The first couple years, I was roping with my dad. He let me have free roll, but he was still my dad. I was not out really making bad decisions. I'm sure there's a lot I messed up, but as far as life decisions, I don't feel like I've let drugs or alcohol ever conflict with my ability. I've made good friends and had good times.

**CS: What do you wish you did better as far as roping is concerned?**

**TY:** Yes, but I don't know what it is. I think the hardest thing is getting out of a funk or into a rhythm. I wish the way it felt when things were going good, I wish I could have that feeling every time I back into the box. That's just not always the case. That's the only thing I can think of. I guess I should say it would be the super-confident, winning mentality. But that key confidence just isn't always there.

**CS: What horses do you have on the road this summer?**

**TY:** I have Tux and Dude and a sorrel horse I call Duke that I bought from my godfather. He'll be with me in the next couple weeks. I have another bay I call Paycheck. At some point, I'll have all four of them. I wouldn't be surprised, especially if things aren't going great, I'll get YY back out here because he helps me pull through no matter what.

**CS: When you're struggling with your roping, who do you turn to?**

**TY:** It's a tough gig for me, because there's really no answer in my family other than work hard. My grandpa and my dad instilled that in me. We're family-oriented and we rely on each other. There's not one specific person other than them. ■

## Inner Strength with Trey Yates



KATLIN GUSTAVE PHOTO

# The Journey with Trey Yates

*Mental toughness is a journey.*

I hate missing. I hated missing when I started rodeoing, and I still hate missing.

Thankfully, I had a partner like my dad (21-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualifier JD Yates) who is about as mentally tough as you can be. He has such a strong mental game; there's no telling where I'd be if I didn't have him. They say a lot of guys need to take five or 10 minutes to get over something and then go on, but Dad can ride out of the arena, talk to himself about a mistake on the ride out, and then it's done.

When I started roping with my dad, I would let a miss carry over to the next steer, and I've learned I can't do that to be successful. That's just part of the game. I'm working on trying to accept that it's going to happen, and it happens to the best in the world. Cory Petska told me

that two things make a winner: First, a strong mental game and, second, good horses. I know I already have half the battle down because I'm on great horses. Now, I just need to accomplish the other half.

You don't wake up and start rodeoing and automatically not care about missing. But it's the people who overcome those negative feelings who are successful. There are so many talented guys on the road, and only 15 on each side make the NFR. There's something that sets them apart, and I think it's the mental side of it.

Over the Fourth of July run in 2018, all I could think about was being in the position I was in—in the top three in the world, with a chance at my first Wrangler NFR. But I needed to continue roping to



win. My dad told me just that—that if I go to roping to make the Wrangler NFR, it won't work.

I've been on such a high [in the past]. We're liable to hit a low spot just as fast, and I need to not forget what got me here. I've got to go home and rope as hard as I'd have roped if I'd have missed every steer. I can't let the highs get too high or the lows get too low, and I'm working on that every single day. ■

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# The Heel Horse's Start

A whole lot of ink is spent talking about the start on the head side. **Trey Yates** breaks down how he gets rolling on the heels.

KAITLIN GUSTAVE PHOTO



**1** Standing in the corner, especially on my bay horse, Dude (Romancing The Chics), I'm not as concerned about my horse standing perfectly still, looking straight at the steer. Dude tends to want to squat, so I don't sit him all the way in the corner. I squeeze him with my legs if I feel him start to squat, and I let him turn his head to the left. It's a comfort thing for him, and I know that he's going to go when that steer leaves no matter what. I try to stay as calm and relaxed through my body as I can, because I know he can feel everything I'm doing.

**2** It seems like when I watch videos of myself, I catch myself watching my header nod. I don't just drop the hammer—I kind of leave my hand down a little bit, but still pick up. When I get halfway to the plane of the box, I'm rolling. I try to get my toes down and my feet behind me, locked in the swells of my saddle. That gives me power on my rope, so when the steer turns, I'm ready.



**3** On my horse's first step out of the box, I want to break down the wall. Some people have it in their minds that they need the steer going left fast. But a lot of great runs are straight or even a step to the right. My horses are decently fast, so even if I break down the wall, if the steer heads left, my horses can always be in the left lead. Whichever direction the steer goes, they usually don't have to swap leads, so there are no unnatural movements.

TREY YATES  
2018 NFR AVERAGE CHAMPION

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## STEP BY STEP with Trey Yates



**4** I want my horse's shoulders, rib cage and hips in line and straight going down the wall. I will let him turn his nose in a little bit, but I want his body square between my legs. If my horse is wrapped around my leg with his body curled, when the cow turns, he will have to get straightened back out to take the jerk. But, if his head is up, body is straight and butt is down, he'll be ready to take the jerk whenever I throw.



**5** I've always ridden really broke horses—probably too broke, as I've come to understand. It takes some numbing up of a really broke horse to really be able to pull off shots and react in a rodeo situation. When I got Dude, he was 7 years old. As a show horse, he was programmed to run and stop as hard as he could and take the jerk. The more I got him where he wasn't stopping and running backward when I heeled the steer, it just got easier. It took a lot of runs jackpotting and rodeoing. Fundamentals go out the window when you have to be 4 or 5 every time. You can't have one bridle up when you pull leaving the box. I like one pulling back on me a little bit in the bridle leaving the box, because that lets me pull on him without him immediately bridling up and rating too hard leaving the box when I need to react. ■





KAITLIN GUSTAVE PHOTO

## Finding Power in Position with Trey Yates

*Trey Yates' take on heeling position when you're too close, finding power to deliver your rope and having good separation when leaving the box.*

I see a lot of lower-numbered ropers or kids getting too close to the cow throughout the run, which doesn't allow for enough distance. That affects a lot of things, but most importantly, it affects the position your body is in as you deliver. That body position relates directly to the power you can put on your tip.

### **TOO CLOSE**

Being too close to the cow going down the arena and through the corner will cause you to try to sit down and back in your saddle to create the distance you need to see the feet and deliver your rope. Plus, if that steer slows down too much or stops, you only have that first shot because your horse is going to need

to stop, then catch up, and you'll be out of time.

### **RIGHT SPOT**

When I'm delivering my rope, I want to have my legs locked into my swells, with my toes down and my feet behind me. You've got to have pressure in your stirrups and be standing up to get the power from your whole body.

### **MAKING IT HAPPEN**

A lot of top guys have trouble describing this position because it has so much to do with personal preference. Here's my take, though. I want to leave the box with my horse's head tipped a bit to the left watching the cow, but I want

him breaking up the wall. That gives me room to pull if the steer steps left or right. Here's the key, though. I want to be the same distance from the steer when the head rope goes on as I am when I heel the steer. That not only gives me good separation, it gives me the ability to see the feet from the position of power I'm in. ■