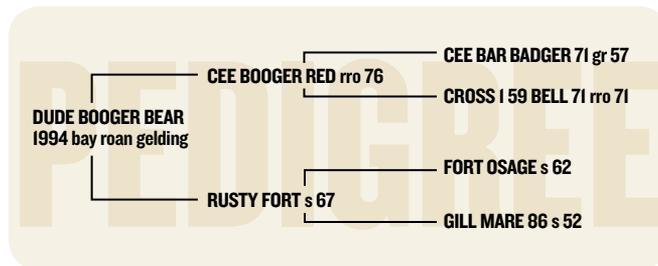


# From the GROUND Up

**Dude Booger Bear helped Coleman Proctor build his roping career, going from junior high competition to the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo.**

Dude Booger Bear helped Coleman Proctor hit the pinnacle of rodeo competition when they won a buckle at the 2015 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo.

**By Mary McCashin**



ON A USUALLY HOT DAY IN MAY 1997, 12-YEAR-OLD COLEMAN Proctor and his dad, Keith, made their way to Ron Patton's farm to try out a 3-year-old, 14.2-hand bay roan gelding that went by the name of "Booger." On the drive, Coleman's dad tried to keep the boy's head level: "We're not going to buy him if he's no good, don't love him just because you need a horse." The offspring of the infamous Cee Booger Red had an asking price of \$3,000.

Coleman climbed aboard the green Quarter Horse and within 30 minutes proclaimed his love for Booger and told his dad they had to buy him. One catch? They couldn't get the little gelding to load.

"We had a single-axle two-horse trailer, and he just would not get on it. We almost ended up not buying him because I couldn't get him to load. It was just breaking my heart that I couldn't get him on the trailer," Coleman says.

Eventually, after several hours, Dude Booger Bear loaded, and he and Coleman and went to their first junior rodeo that night. "We had a '96 red Suburban and a two-horse trailer with a fiberglass roof. I hauled that horse around the world the next year," Coleman says.

It ended up being the best money the Proctor family had ever spent. From the second Booger and Coleman's partnership began, it was clear to everyone that the grouchy bay roan was something special.

"All my buddies rode him," Coleman says. "We hazed on him, roped calves on him, headed, heeled, and some girls did breakaway roping, barrels and poles. Booger just did it all and seemed to enjoy every minute of it."

His bloodlines and versatility caught people's attention.

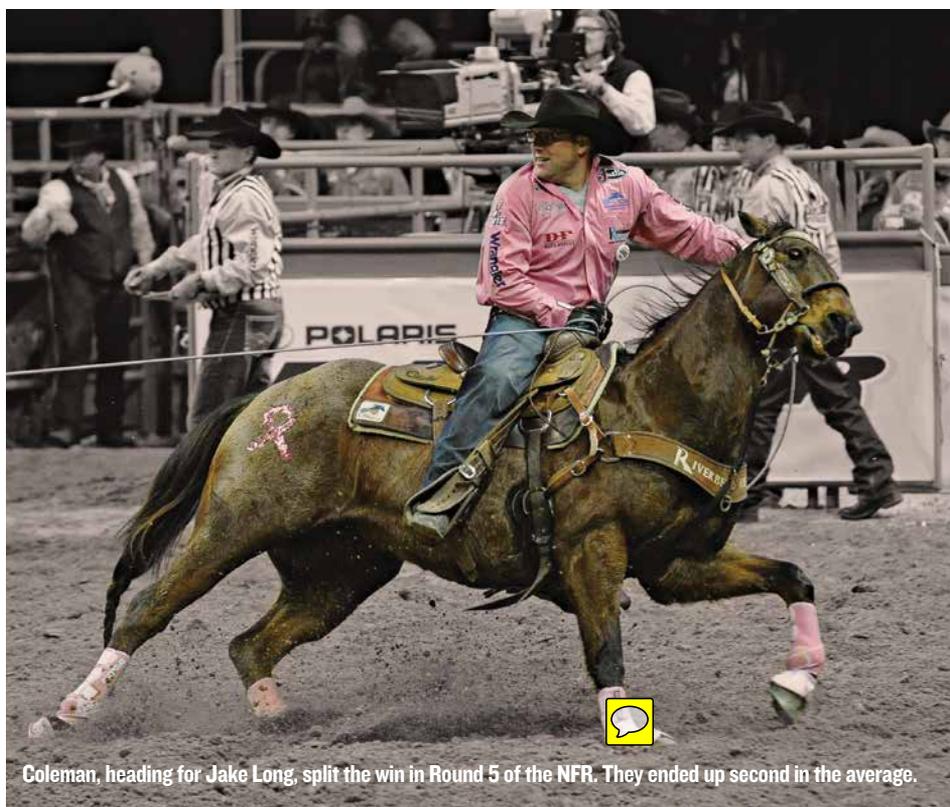
"Early on, a lot of people tried to buy him from me, but it quickly became clear that he was my horse, and that's what it was always going to be. We grew up together; he's a part of the family. I never would've been able to part with him."

Coleman and Booger ended up going to the National Junior High Finals Rodeo (heading, heeling and breakaway roping), the National High School Finals Rodeo (heeling and tie-down roping), the College National Finals Rodeo (heeling and heading), and eventually the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (heading).

"You know, he was never the most athletic horse, and he never faced up great, but he's that teammate I could always rely on," Coleman says. "When I was broke, really needing a win, needing to turn that one steer to make it to the Finals – he's the horse I'd get on because I knew he had my back. It took me a while to appreciate that, but now that I know I'll never have one better, I can't seem to appreciate him enough."

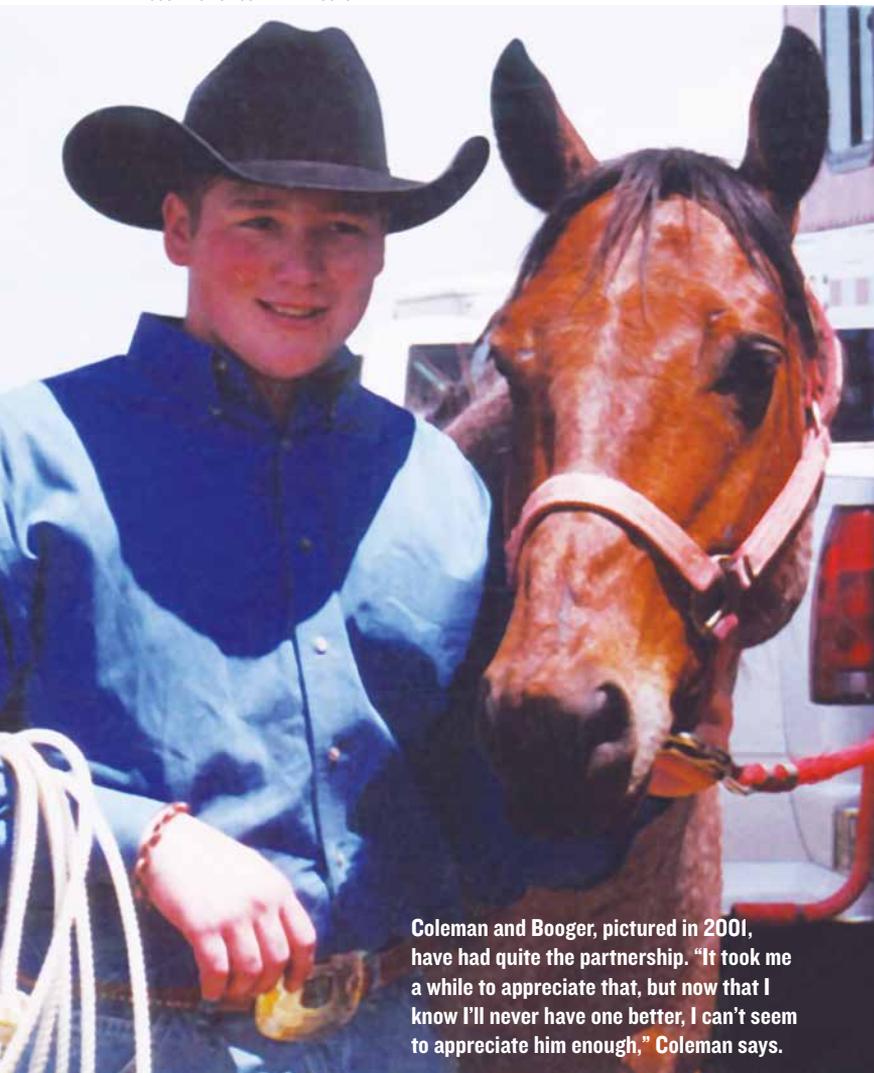
In their 19 years together, Coleman and Booger have had a seemingly magical partnership.

"That horse just seems invincible," he says. "When we were younger, my sister and I were in a trailer accident with



Coleman, heading for Jake Long, split the win in Round 5 of the NFR. They ended up second in the average.

PICAL/ENA SCORFIELD



Coleman and Booger, pictured in 2001, have had quite the partnership. "It took me a while to appreciate that, but now that I know I'll never have one better, I can't seem to appreciate him enough," Coleman says.

Booger. He got thrown out the top of that fiberglass trailer, and all he ended up with was a scratch. The next rodeo came along, and Booger just walked right on the trailer like it'd never happened."

The 22-year-old gelding is still "sound as the day is long," Coleman says, and requires almost no maintenance.

"He gets (coffin joints) injected before Finals every year, but that's about it."

Coleman chooses only the best tack and protective gear for his horse "because he deserves the best. What Booger wants, Booger gets."

In 2010, Booger again proved just how special he was.

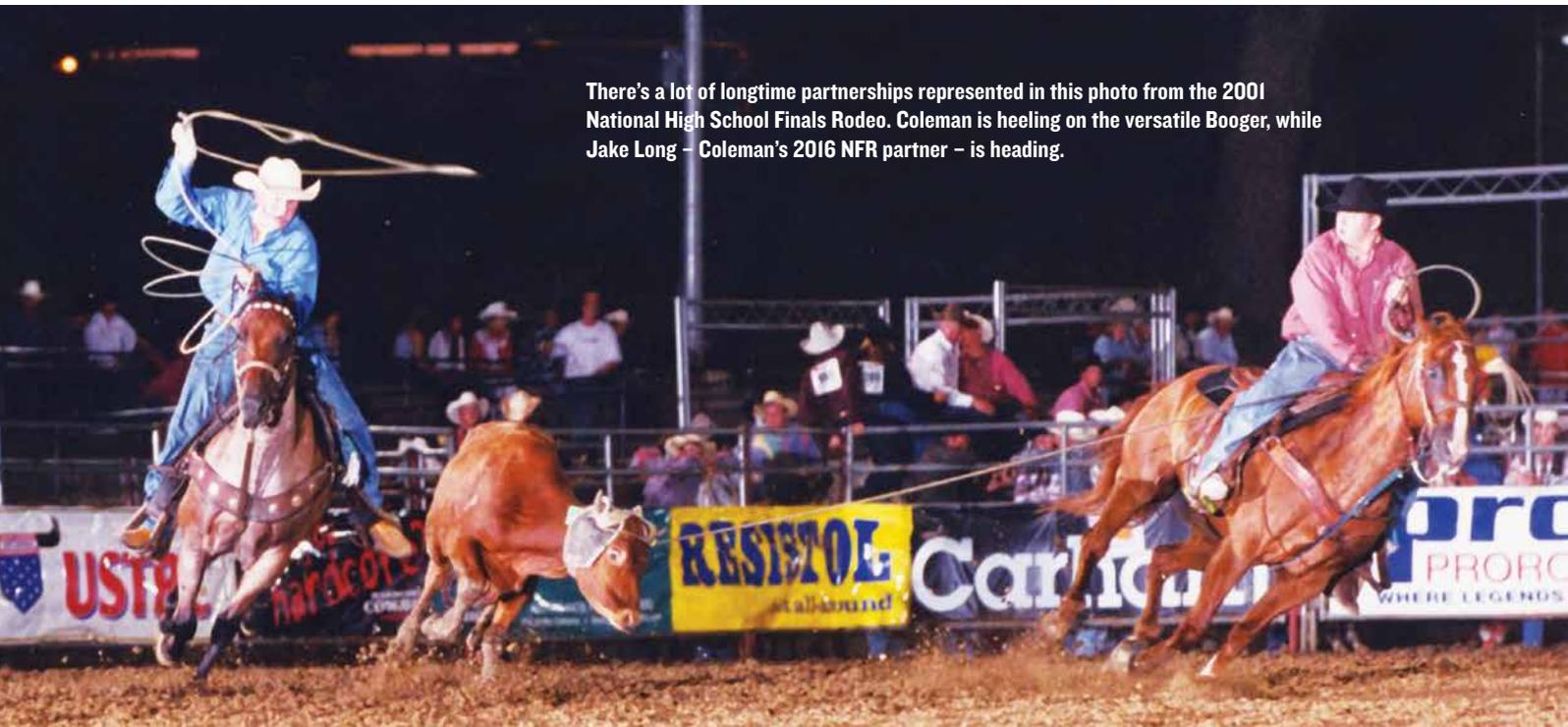
"I'd won the George Strait roping on him in March, and I figured he deserved a break. I was in Stephenville, Texas, practicing, and it was about 5:30 in the morning. The dew was heavy, my rope felt terrible, and things just weren't coming together. I hopped on out-of-shape, chubby Booger, and that first practice run, everything just clicked. It all felt right – the rope didn't feel heavy, Booger stayed under me the whole time, and after three more perfect practice runs, I loaded his butt on the trailer, and he went with us."

Coleman only used Booger at two rodeos last summer, but he had a lot of comfort in knowing that he had his best horse and best friend with him should he need him.

"Before we headed to the NFR, I called home and made sure Booger had new shoes put on. I just couldn't head to Las Vegas without him," he says.

It was a decision that once again would be life-changing.

"I rode SCR Sporties Playgun in the first four



There's a lot of longtime partnerships represented in this photo from the 2001 National High School Finals Rodeo. Coleman is heeling on the versatile Booger, while Jake Long – Coleman's 2016 NFR partner – is heading.

rounds,” Coleman says. “I bought him from my friend Tyler Boston, and he’s my No. 2 horse behind Booger. Things just weren’t clicking for some reason, and my confidence was waning. So I pulled Booger’s chunky butt out of the stall, and we went on to tie for the Round 5 win, with a 4.0. He’ll never break your heart; he always gives it his all.”

When describing Booger, Coleman never mentions the little gelding’s amazing breeding. Booger’s sire was none other than Cee Booger Red (“Roanie”), owned and bred by Debby Foreman of Dewey, Oklahoma. Roanie, who also stood at 14.2 hands, has produced offspring that have won world championships, NFR buckles, trucks and trailers. Top ropers such as Joe Beaver, Trevor Brazile and Rickey Kieckhefer have competed on Cee Booger Red horses.

While many cowboys would be eagerly looking for a second horse of the same caliber as Booger, Coleman knows the likelihood of that outcome.

“He’s so special; I’ll never try to replace him. I do have other horses that are faster, work better and are all-around better performance horses, but he’s the one I know is irreplaceable.”

Coleman has four other horses that he says Booger has “allowed” him to purchase, and he keeps them in a constant rotation when traveling and competing, including another son of Cee Booger Red. No matter what, though, the No. 1 spot in the Pryor, Oklahoma, cowboy’s heart belongs to Dude Booger Bear.

As Booger ages, turning 22 in 2016, Coleman is well aware that his remaining time in the rodeo arena is limited. And that puts the pressure on.

“If it’s the last year I run on him, then I’d better be winning, because he doesn’t deserve to go out a loser. He’s going to be used for good, life-changing money. He’s my clinch player. I want to pull him out for jackpots and smaller rodeos because I trust him so much, but he deserves more than that.”

In fact, Booger built Coleman’s barn. When he won the George Strait Classic, Coleman used his earnings to build an eight-stall barn, including a master suite for Booger.

“That horse doesn’t even like to be inside, but if he chooses to, he can come and go as he pleases, and that first stall is always going to be his. Heck, if he wanted a stall in the house, I’d make that happen for him; he just doesn’t like to be inside that much.”

Aside from the confidence, trust and unmatched partnership he gives Coleman, Booger has several quirks that make him an interesting ride. The roan gelding is notoriously grumpy.

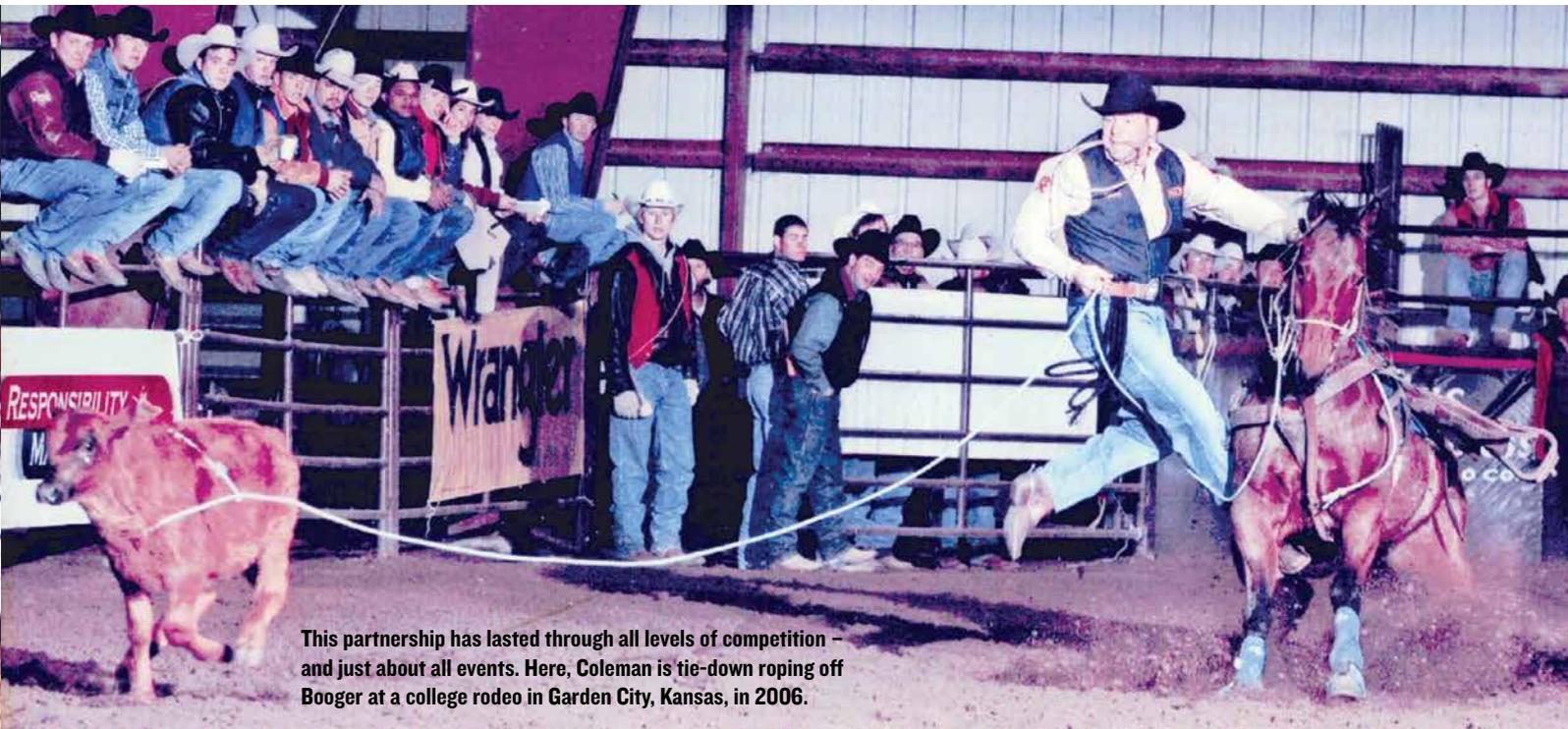
“He’s just a grumpy old man. He doesn’t like helicopters, loud wind, firecrackers or ‘Blurred Lines’ by Robin Thicke,” Coleman says. “We were at a rodeo, and that song came on, and Booger just went to crow hopping around like a colt. I just laughed – he has to let me know he’s still young at heart and as sound as the day is long.”

If there’s one key thing Booger has taught Coleman, it’s not to let a horse’s price tag determine his worth.

“He was \$3,000,” Coleman says. “I know a lot of great horses that cost a hell of a lot more than that, but what if we’d walked away from him because of that? Or hadn’t even bothered to try him? He has allowed me to win two NFR buckles, to win the George Strait, heck, just to go to the NFR. I couldn’t be more thankful or appreciative of him.”

Coleman knows he’ll never again have the partnership he has with Booger. It’s irreplaceable.

“I take care of him, and he takes care of me. I treat him better than I treat myself. He eats and drinks before I do, and that’s the way it will always be,” Coleman says. “He’s my prized possession, and whatever he might want or need is what he’s going to get, period. He deserves to retire sound. He deserves to be fat and look as good as he does. He’s family.”



**This partnership has lasted through all levels of competition – and just about all events. Here, Coleman is tie-down roping off Booger at a college rodeo in Garden City, Kansas, in 2006.**

JJJ PHOTO