

**Profiles in Rodeo: Reese Riemer**  
**“Cowboys and Indians”**  
**by Mary McCashin**

When Reese Riemer was just 17-years-old he began making big moves in the rodeo world. First by winning the Texas Cowboy Rodeo Association tie-down roping championship followed by winning that same title again two years later. Reese also set a record for TCRA year-end earnings. From there it has been a steady rise to the top. Reese won the National High School Rodeo Association tie-down championship, was crowned the Resistol Rookie of the Year in 2012, and finished 24th in the world in 2013. It all cumulated with his first trip to the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo this past December.

But anyone who knows Reese Riemer has known the Texas cowboy was headed for Las Vegas' Thomas & Mack Arena since he was a teenager. Born in Stinnet, Texas, his father Jimmy is a well-known roper and rodeo judge in his own right and his mother Janie qualified for the 1978 NFR in barrel racing. Reese credits his father with teaching him everything about roping and keeping him focused during the 2014 NFR.



Having previously, though briefly, lived with fellow NFR tie-down roper Tyson Durfey and his wife, musician Shea Fisher, Tyson had a solid support system for his first NFR experience. "I talked to Tyson some while I was there, but I also had my good buddy Miles Ashton out there with me," Reese says. "Miles helped keep me calm down in the box and helped warm-up my horse as well. After each run we'd break things down so I could build on that and try to make each round better than the previous one." Also at his side was Reese's dad, "I've learned everything from him. He knows more about my roping than anybody." With the support of his friends, family, and fellow competitors Reese approached the National Finals as a learning experience.

Reese's first trip to the NFR might not be what most people consider ideal, "Most people would probably say I had a bad finals, and I did, but I learned a lot so that makes it a positive experience for me. You learn things from bad runs and bad experiences just as much as you learn from good things." For the 24-year-old cowboy it was an enlightening experience. "It was everything I expected and more," he says. "Honestly, I was a bit blindsided with all the things we did for sponsors during the day. You're running from one convention center to another and then you go straight to the arena and start getting ready, which was probably the biggest eye opener for me for the whole two weeks. That was the most exhausted I've ever been in my life, I slept for two days straight when I got home."

With the 2015 schedule well underway Reese has applied his NFR lessons to the new season and is set on improving his mental game as much as possible. "Rodeo is a very humbling sport. I've played a lot of sports but I've never experienced anything as humbling as rodeo," he says. "It's not a three or four-month season, it's 12 months of the year and we have to stay sharp that whole time. Unlike some teams which get hot then cold, you can have a good month in rodeo and then miss every calf for the next three months." Unlike most professional athletes, Reese and his fellow cowboys don't get a paycheck win or lose. The added

pressure of making a living makes rodeo just as much of a mental game for cowboys as it is a test of athletic ability.

Also in contention for RFD-TV's *The American*, Reese is slowly making his way through the semifinals and hopes for a chance to compete for \$1 million dollars in one run on March 1st. "That kind of money is just unheard of in our sport. One thing I learned from the NFR though is to keep looking at the big picture but to also take each run as they come. We still have four runs to go in the semifinals so I'm just taking it one run at a time this year."

It is that very advice that Reese hopes the next generation pays attention to, "You just have to stay positive and approach each run individually. If you have a bad run try to find the positive in it, whether it's that you figured out an issue you need to work on or that your horse worked really well for you. You can't dwell on a bad run, or even a good run. If you break a barrier you have to shake it off and go onto the next one. If you win a check that's awesome, but it's onto the next one and a check isn't guaranteed." Reese stresses that you can never stop learning, as he learned more about himself during his first run at the world championship buckle.

"In my three years in professional rodeo I've learned that the mental aspect that goes into rodeo can really work for you or work against you. If you look at guys like Tuf Cooper, Trevor Brazile, or Cody Ohl their mental game is just as strong as their

athletic ability. That's one thing that you have to learn, you have to go through some stuff to get that mental aspect of the game. You have to be selfless and be willing to sacrifice so much to get to the top."

Reese has set his own goals for the 2015 season, "I just am going to keep working for that gold buckle," he explains. "That's my ultimate goal in my career; it's everybody's in our sport. I have to take some pressure off and take things one run at a time. You have to pace yourself. You have to start with Round 1, you can't automatically jump to Round 10."

One thing is for certain, it is clear that Reese's first trip to the NFR has sharpened him mentally for the 2015 season. His character is reflected in his ability to shake off the bad runs, focus on the positive, and be willing to put in the work to make his goals a reality. And if any upcoming tie-down roper needs someone to look up to, this Texas cowboy certainly sets an example worthy of following.