

One of the things that I believe contributes to a good showing at nationals is getting an early start. At the beginning of the year, January 1st, I start training for the Nationals. Every single day is an important step towards October. It is not just getting ready for a class A show, or a Regional show, I am always getting ready for the Nationals; every day. Whether it be long lining or lounging a horse we, being myself, my clients, my horses and my employees, are looking towards a goal. That being winning a National Championship. That, of course, doesn't always happen. However, after a year of concentrated effort you will find in October that your horses are well prepared and you won't be scrambling to pull things together at the last minute. Somebody once asked me what I thought the results would be if, at the beginning of the school year I went to class every single day with the intent of "acing" the final exam. Good question.

I have had some mentors, but I continue to be influenced by people that I admire and try to emulate certain aspects of what they do. Here is a list of some of the people worth studying. My Dad- Train, Train, Train, with a Dressage influence. Ray LaCroix.- an extremely methodical approach that seldom lets you down. Jimmy Stachowski.- A great showman. Johnny Ryan.- A fellow learner that always has ideas of his own and willing to listen to mine. Shawn Rooker.- A guy that will tell you his secrets. Tim Shea.- A talent that spans decades and his influence will as well. Mary Trowbridge.- A comrade, and an example of presentation in all its facets.

Last year I read Bubba Long's advice on how to get in the ribbons. He said to write your goals down early in the year and commit it to paper. Put it in a place that you will see it every day. I took it one step further, and wrote down along with those goals, every thing that would be necessary (specifically) to achieve those goals. I think it helped.

It would be nutty to say all this without giving the credit to those who really deserve it. You have got to start with great horses. You've got to have farriers that can keep your horses feet happy. You've got to have vets that can shorten any setbacks that are inevitable along the way. You've got to have the help that cares about your horses every day as if they would be taking the victory pass themselves. You've got to have the kind of clients that stand behind you, even during the low points.