

The Story of a Better Barrel Racer: Shelby Oglesby

VERNON, Texas – Last year, Shelby Oglesby, a Junior Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association barrel racer, achieved her lifelong goal of competing at the Junior Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. Now with the support of her rodeo family, the freshman in high school is racing full-speed towards her next ambition.

April 25-29, 2018, Shelby Oglesby competed at the 15th Annual Better Barrel Races World Finals in Oklahoma City with her mother, Becky Oglesby, and her aunt, Amy Craig. The BBR World Finals is the American Rodeo's sanctioned event for barrel racing, Shelby Oglesby said. According to their website, the BBR World Finals is the largest and richest division barrel race in the nation, boasting more than 4,500 contestants who compete for more than \$750,000 in cash and prizes.

"We enjoy [barrel racing] so much because we get to do it together," Becky Oglesby said. "I really do not have a downside to rodeoing. We have an amazing extended barrel racing family. Of course, there are highs and lows of rodeo. The highs are really high and the lows can be low. But, it is all done together."

Shelby Oglesby said the road to the Junior NFR was not an easy one. The first year of the Junior NFR, she hoped to attend, but her horse, Dennis, got hurt and she did not get a chance to compete, she said, but by the second year she was ready to try again. She said she competed in a NFR qualifier and won second in the whole event.

"It was a dream to go to the NFR and it ended up happening a lot sooner than I thought it would" Shelby Oglesby said. "When the Junior NFR started about two years ago, I set that as my

goal. I accomplished it, so now my next goal is qualifying for the American semi-finals and then hopefully ending up in Dallas Cowboy Stadium.”

According to RFD-TV’s website, the American is “the world’s richest rodeo” with a \$1 million jackpot. To compete in the American, contestants must either be invited as one of the top competitors in the world, compete at sanctioned qualifiers throughout the year, or be exempt as a rising star or fan favorite. Shelby Oglesby said she will be competing in sanctioned events and trying to qualify for the American in May.

Shelby Oglesby’s 6-year-old little sister, Kashley Oglesby who also barrel races, said she admires her big sister’s commitment to barrel racing.

“Shelby made it to Vegas and she has a lot of confidence before she goes into that pen,” said Kashley Oglesby. “I look up to her when we ride and practice together. Riding with my sister is one of my favorite things to do.”

Becky Oglesby said the rodeo lifestyle can be tough but being able to do everything as a family makes the sacrifices and rough patches worth it.

Shelby Oglesby said her horse, Dennis, getting hurt is not the only challenge she faced during her rodeoing career. She said barrel racing takes a lot of work and dedication to the sport and the horses.

“There are going to be a lot of tough times in barrel racing,” Shelby Oglesby said. “You just keep going because it will eventually pay off. I remember roads where I just kept hitting barrels and I did not perform very well, but I kept working harder and practicing harder and I kept getting better. Never give up.”

Shelby Oglesby said she started her barrel racing career at age seven with a horse named Red. The horse had an accident and had to be put down, but through that experience she progressed as a rider.

“Red taught her so much,” Becky Oglesby said. “[Losing him] was devastating for Shelby, but it was also a turn of events that led her to where she is now. The step-up horses she got after that taught her how to ride better and compete on a higher level. God turned that horrible situation around and she excelled by leaps and bounds after that happened.”

Shelby Oglesby said after losing Red she began training their ranch horses to run barrels so she could continue racing. Then, they found a barrel horse named Alley.

“Alley got me and my mom far,” said Shelby Oglesby. “She started running on him when I got Dennis. Dennis is my main horse now. He has taught me to ride so much better throughout the years. He is a mess, but he has gotten me to the point where I am starting to ride young horses and train them.”

Shelby Oglesby attributes her accomplishments in barrel racing to “good horses,” and said taking care of those horses is the key to success.

“It all starts with a good diet,” she said. “I have my horses on a high-powered feed and good hay. Diet is the start to keeping them on top of their game.”

Shelby Oglesby said having a good veterinarian is important component to keeping her horses in the best shape possible. She said, they use Outlaw Equine Hospital and Rehab Center in Decatur, Texas. The equine hospital has a facility to swim and water-walk the horses, which keeps the athletes in excellent shape, she said.

“Before big shows we usually send them for a week to two weeks to get them swam,” Shelby Oglesby said. “Swimming them gets the horses breathing good and in shape.”

Shelby Oglesby said in addition to proper nutrition and veterinary care, the day-to-day routine is essential to keeping the horses ready to compete. She said she is constantly working with her horses and practicing to improve their abilities.

Everyone who knows Shelby Oglesby recognizes her passion for the sport and her horses said Julia Maldonado, Shelby Oglesby’s close friend. Maldonado said she often spends time riding horses with Shelby Oglesby and attends jackpots to cheer her on.

“Shelby is incredibly focused when it comes to rodeo,” Maldonado said. “She is always traveling to jackpots all over the state of Texas. Plus, she knows what she is doing and she is always willing to help others who are interested in barrel racing or horses.”

Becky Oglesby said she would describe her daughter as a “true cowgirl in every sense of the word.” Shelby Oglesby comes from a strong rodeo heritage on both sides of her family with three grandparents and two uncles in the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame, she said.

Shelby Oglesby dreamed of going to the NFR since she was old enough to walk and talk, Becky Oglesby said. Shelby Oglesby pushed herself to be the best she could be to meet her lifelong goal and continues to work harder, she said.

“[Shelby’s] hard work and dedication, which most kids her age do not have, will help her succeed,” Becky Oglesby said.

Becky Oglesby said Shelby Oglesby puts in the work it takes to continue progressing towards her goals. She said she will do all she can to help her daughter reach her goals.

“She eats, sleeps and breathes horses and has all her life,” Becky Oglesby said. “She has a very special bond with her horses because she spends so much time on them and with them. That’s her whole life. It’s her passion and we will follow it.”

