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TOPS IN HER FIELD

A&M senior takes first place in national rodeo

By RULY MEDRANO
 Sports Writer of the BATTALION

Imagine what it would be like to be in command of an animal more than ten times your weight. Imagine the thrill of controlling the beast through hairpin turns with the finesse of a surgeon and then accelerating to speeds of over 30 miles per hour. Now, imagine what it would feel like to know you do it better than any other college student in the United States.

Texas A&M senior Mindy Morris can tell you all about it. Morris, an animal science major from Seymour, is the 1992 National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association Barrel Racing Champion. She beat out over 60 competitors at the NIRA Finals Rodeo in June in Bozeman, Montana.

Morris explains that she did not travel the road to the top alone. She frequently uses the word "we" when she speaks of her championship effort. Morris gives equal credit to her racing partner, Bits, a sorrel colored quarter-horse. "It's not just me, it's him too," she said. "I couldn't win without him, but he could probably win with someone else. But we don't want to talk about that."

Much like a human athlete, Bits can have good days and days when he just can't perform up to par. "Sometimes Bits won't be feeling well and he'll try to run, but he just can't," Morris said. "I can pretty much tell how he'll do as soon as I take him out of the trailer."

Morris said she can't remember when she first started riding

horses, but said she's been 'running barrels' for over ten years.

Morris even had a brief stint as a horseracing jockey at Lubbock Downs. That sport didn't have much of an appeal to her, so she decided to stick to barrel racing.

Morris' love for the rodeo goes back to her childhood, but she didn't always think highly of barrel racing.

"When I was about five-years old, I would watch the bucking and roping events and get all excited," Morris explained. "When the barrel racing would start though, I'd go get something to eat or go play. I used to think it (barrel racing) was a sissy sport."

Morris said she can now appreciate the hard work involved in her sport. But every once in a while, a few male rodeo competitors don't want to give it credit.

Some of the men think we're (women riders) a pain in the rear," she said. "But most of them don't look down on us. Most of them are really nice and we're pretty much all big buddies."

Morris, a member of the TAMU Rodeo Club, is just as proud of her academic success at A&M as she is with her rodeo achievements.

She started the fall semester with an overall 3.7 grade-point ratio and she was quick to point out the academic prowess of a couple of her fellow A&M Rodeo Club members.

Morris said Robin Wardlaw, the Southern Regional Goat Tying and All-Around Women's Champion, graduated this past spring with over a 3.0 GPR, and Southern Regional Champion Calf Roper John Price, a senior, is also carrying over a 3.0 at A&M.

As for her future, Morris said



DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

A&M senior Mindy Morris and her horse Bits won this year's National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association Barrel Racing championship.

she is looking forward to riding professionally in the Women's Pro Rodeo Association. However, she said she may attend the Texas A&M School of Veterinary Medicine.

Although doing both may be difficult, Morris said she believes it is possible for rodeo cowboys

and cowgirls to have careers on

side of the rodeo circuit. "Many rodeo people can't make a living just riding, but a lot of them have other jobs," Morris explained. "Most riders are farmer's sons and daughters. There's a bunch of weekend rodeo people."

Smith

Continued From Page 7

Smith stated there is a major distinctness that is readily apparent the minute a player steps on the field in the NFL.

"The level of play up here in the pros is so noticeable," he said. "The accuracy of passes coming from the quarterbacks and the precise routes the receivers run (compared to the college game) are like night and day."

Dallas' next opponent is the Philadelphia Eagles, who are led by the always-dangerous Randall Cunningham at quarterback. Cunningham can do so much from his position, and, according to Smith, a defensive back has to be on guard at all times.

"Dealing with Cunningham is tough because one time he is there and the next time he is not,"

Smith said laughing. "You can have perfect coverage on a receiver and he still completes a pass right by you."

Smith said he has developed some friendships on the Cowboys that can only enhance Dallas' chances to play in the Super Bowl this season.

"I have been hanging out with Kenny Gant and some of the other defensive backs," he said. "Like me, he is still a youngster so we are kind of learning together."

"Two other defensive backs came up with me and overall we are young team. Being tight with each other can only help us as a team."

While starring in high school, Smith heard many different pitches from recruiters all over the country.

For Smith, A&M had one recruiting tool that not many other schools could offer him. That made his college choice a very easy one.

"The main thing was A&M did some of the same things as the pros do and the coaches emphasized that during recruiting visits," said the number two all-time Southwest Conference interception leader. "Coach Slocum and his crew use the professional opportunity as a main recruiting aspect."

"It is very impressive when eight or nine guys from my class alone get a shot at the pros. Those eight or nine came out of twenty-five guys."

"Coach Slocum dwells on that, and he should."

Since Smith withdrew from school last spring to prepare for the draft, he said he was in College Station for a special reason this Tuesday.

"I came back down there to get my paper work corrected out so I could get back in and resume taking classes."

"I plan to finish up my degree requirements soon."

Although Smith's attention is focused on the Cowboys' upcoming opponents, he has cast an eye toward the newspapers and how this year's Aggies are faring.

"I have been watching what's happening (with the Aggies)," Smith said. "A&M is 4-0 and Dallas is 3-0 and it seems like everybody is panicking. Nobody will remember the close games. The games at the end count the most."

Smith also said he had a message for A&M's fans concerning this year's team.

"If A&M wins the close games people should not make something out of nothing," he said. "It doesn't matter if Jeff Grange throws six interceptions or one interception."

"If they are 12-0 and playing for the Cotton Bowl then nobody will remember the close wins in Tulsa."

"That is what should matter to the fans."

Foster

Continued From Page 7

tennis players of all time. Sure, it's a great marketing ploy, and actually a chance to see how one of women's tennis' all-time greats would stack up against her male counterpart.

But charging viewers money for it? That's almost like paying to watch Jethro Bodine compete against Dan Quayle in a spelling bee.

Do they actually expect to make money off of this thing? How many people will actually throw away the cash to watch a

washed-up female player take on a has-been male player? Too many, probably. People who don't realize they might as well drop their wallet off the top of Kyle Field.

This is not really a monumental sporting event, so I can't see charging for it. The bad thing is, before long the cable companies will be charging for monumental sporting events. Which is even worse than charging for such a minute event.

Just imagine paying for ALL seven games of the World Series. Or the NBA Championship series. If it costs \$35 to view a heavyweight championship fight, think what they could get away with charging for the Super Bowl? Possibly \$100 or even

higher. It would almost be cheaper to go see the thing live.

At least if they did put the Super Bowl on pay-per-view, maybe they would get the reception right for the entire game. For those who managed to stay awake through the A&M-Missouri game, you know what I'm talking about.

But folks, we can't let it get that far. I refuse to pay to watch the Super Bowl, and I refuse to miss the Super Bowl. We can't win for losing!

What are the people who can't get tickets to the game going to do about seeing their team because they can't afford to watch it on television?

The worst thing is, the advertisers are paying millions of dol-

lars to pay for these broadcasts and now the viewers AND the advertisers will be paying for it.

It seems if viewers are going to pay for the game as if they were in the stands, they shouldn't have to view commercials as well.

It's simple. We need a revolt. Stop buying their stupid pay-per-view telecasts, and they'll realize they can't make any money doing it. With no viewers, advertisers will surely pull out of the picture.

Then again, the cable companies may take care of that themselves. If they keep scheduling Connors-Navratilova and A&M-Missouri, no one will watch.

Probably not even the production crew.

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