

Chase Cervi Makes it to the 2010 Wrangler NFR

At 24 years old, Chase Cervi is the youngest pick up man to work the arena at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. “I feel very fortunate and thank God that I have good horses and a family that’s behind me,” said the native from Roggen, Colo.

He found out he got the job while in Waco, Texas at the All American Finals. Chase remembered, “Sunni Backstrom was the secretary. She’s like a second mom on the road; she called me into the office and had champagne and cake and told me I got the Finals. I couldn’t believe it! I was pretty excited.”

He leaves for Las Vegas on November 28th with a load of six of his best pickup horses and gear. His brother, Binion, will head out a week earlier with ten bucking horses and five bulls that were selected to go to the WNFR. “We are very fortunate. Back in the 70’s, my dad had 30 head out there one year between horses and bulls, but that was before they had 80 stock contractors.”

Chase has attended the WNFR for many years, only once staying the full ten days. “It seemed like a long time then, but there will be plenty to do this time attending the PRCA convention and meeting with the various rodeo committees as we prepare for the 2011 rodeo season” and of course, the pickup horses are his number one priority this year.

Being a pickup man at the National Finals fulfills a top priority on Chase’s bucket list. It is particularly rewarding to be in the position this year as his sister-in-law, Sherry Cervi, heads into the Finals as number one in barrel racing. He also appreciates the fact that he’ll be there as a result of the vote of confidence given to him by the top 20 bareback and saddle bronc riders.

When not rodeoing, Chase spends his days working at his dad’s Greeley feed lot and on the Cervi Ranch located in Roggen (population 125). Chase grew up there with his older brother, Binion. The brothers worked, helping the family with the stock contracting business, feedlot and ranch. “I’ve been on a horse my whole life,” he said.

“When we were in grade school, we’d fly down to the winter rodeos – Houston, San Antonio and San Angelo, to see my dad. We always ask him to take us to the pens” remembers Chase. “I definitely always liked to be in the back helping Jerry Dorenkamp, Scott McClain, and Chuck Holloway sort and feed.”

Chase admits to having some battles with Binion growing up. “It could be interesting – this one time we were coming home – I was probably five or six – he was 7 or 8. We were in the car and he did something to make me mad and I whopped him in the side of the mouth with a seat belt and he had to have stitches. I had to walk home – we were five miles from the house on a dirt road. It was a long walk.”

The brothers get along great now – they each have their roles in the company and they work well together.

Chase, not a big fan of school, attended Weld Central high school. He played football from second grade until his sophomore year of high school. "I was going to all the rodeos with my dad and I just dropped other things for rodeo. I wish I would have played more football and done more school activities. Now I get to go to all the rodeos I want and can't do those other things." Despite the schedule challenges, Chase graduated from high school and was awarded a college scholarship.

He started picking up at a convention rodeo in Denver when he was 15. "It was in the old coliseum and I picked up with Scott McClain. There were four barebacks and four broncs. That was one time I was nervous the whole time."

Chase attributes part of his abilities to the fact that he spent his childhood riding bareback. "That helped me with balance and learning how to pick up. Scott McClain helped me a bunch too. I just jumped in and the more I did the better I got."

Chase explains his role in the rodeo business today, "I'm the pickup man and help with the daily care of the livestock. Binion does all the front work – the politics and the chute boss. Scotty and I are in charge of sorting and getting everything ready for the show."

His father, Mike, got into the rodeo business in 1966 when he purchased Beutler Brothers Rodeo Co. It operates today as Beutler Bros. and Cervi. In 1973, Mike Cervi bought the Billy Minick Rodeo which became Cervi Championship Rodeo Co. The two companies now produce 151 rodeo performances throughout the year.

Binion and Chase were fortunate to have the reins of the company passed to them at a young age. Chase was 19 and Binion 21. Together with their cousin, Scotty, the boys have handled the business like men.

Chase had just graduated from high school and spent the next year working with the rodeo company. "We sure found out in a hurry who our friends were. Binion and I knew we had to have our A game on and not make many mistakes, that's for sure."

The next year Chase tried his hand at college, studying Ag business at Panhandle State. "Craig Latham was a really good coach and I picked up at the practices. School was not my favorite thing. You can't beat working and doing what you love. I had to take a serious look at that." Chase headed back to the ranch and picked up where he left off ranching and picking up at the rodeos.

Chase continued expanding his bull herd, something he had started when he was young. "I was 14 years old when my dad started letting me flank all the bulls and that's what got me interested in it. We have raised horses for 30 years, and now we're just getting into the bulls. Ever since I was little I liked the bucking bulls. They appeal to me."

Chase acquired one or two cows a year to add to his herd. "This was kind of my 4-H project. I got cows from Donny Kish, Sammy Andrews and Trent West. I studied the bloodlines, then purchased some Locomotive, Blueberry Wine, and Copenhagen Cashbred cows." His hope is to raise bulls that are selected to go to the WNFR.

Following in his father's footsteps, Chase will continue to rodeo, but his ultimate goal is to run the feedlot and ranch.

No matter what Chase is doing, he feels fortunate. "Our whole family thanks God for what we have."