

THE HORSEMAN

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MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU AND YOURS FROM VAN HARGIS HORSEMANSHIP !

IN THIS EDITION

KYLE HOCKETT- THE COLT STARTING CHAMPION

Learn more about Kyle and his journey to becoming the 2015 Colt Starting Champion.

Continued on Page 2

LEARN THE ABOUT THE ORIGINAL VAN HARGIS COLT STARTING SADDLE

Continued on Page 4

ASK VAN

Do you have a question or problem that you would like Van to address?

Send us an email!

Van@VanHargis.com

and your question may be featured in our next newsletter

2015 COLT STARTING CHAMPION

Congratulations to Kyle Hockett, the 2015 Colt Starting Champion at the Colt Starting Challenge USA Finals held during the NFR at the Wrangler Rodeo Arena in Las Vegas.



Kyle is the first ever winner of the Van Hargis Colt Starting Saddle made by Reinsman Equestrian Products.

Click [here](#) to visit the [Reinsman](#) website for more information on Van Hargis saddles.



REINSMAN

Kyle Hockett receives his Van Hargis Colt Starting Saddle made by Reinsman Products

Kyle Hockett is the 2015 Colt Starting Champion

Hats off to the deserving winner of the Colt Starting Challenge USA for 2015, Kyle Hockett!

When Kyle met his challenge, a 2 1/2 year old, blue roan Quarter Horse filly named "Coco" he thought, "Oh man, I have my work cut out for me!" Kyle, however, knew that he would be successful if he stuck to his game plan. As he noticed the other contestants using flags and such, Kyle reminded himself that, "that's not who I am. I use my rope and lead." Sticking to his plan helped to control the nerves and anxiety in his horse.

Kyle and his wife Sarah live in Winlock, WA with their three boys. Kyle trains and shoes horses at his day job and loves to work with 3 year olds and describes doing such as his "outlet" of choice. Kyle credits his father as his biggest influence. His father, Gary Hockett, was the good cowboy in the local

area that everyone sent their tough horses to because Gary was as tough as they were. Kyle began training with his dad at age 9. His dad would pony the horses and Kyle would ride. He learned fast on how to be sticky and where he needed to be to stay safe. Kyle credits this training and experience for his success at the competition.

As Kyle approached day one of the Challenge he observed that the filly "had enough movement in her feet to ride nicely." It then became his goal to gain her trust and build her confidence. He was able to do so, and go into his program to get her to ride softly. Kyle states that his first step is always to move slowly and read the horse's reaction to him just being in the pen.

"Kyle earned the right to be here. He did a good job and never picked a fight with his mare."

~Van



"I have a very simple idea with a horse and that is less is sometimes more"

~Kyle

2015 Colt Starting Champion

It's in those first moments that he makes the decision as to whether the horse has a flight or fight reaction. This filly seemed to be a bit flighty so he "just went slow and worked on trust." Kyle was able to build a relationship with his filly and bring down the energy and anxiety.

He proved to do so quite well on day one and was able to work on the holes on day two. Working slowly and on one thing at a time; not relying on gimmicks. After addressing the issue of her being too rootie, as she was pushing on her halter and head gear, Kyle was able to improve her steering and significantly gain more confidence.

By day three, Kyle had all the confidence in himself and in his horse that he needed to compete in the final obstacle course. He impressed the crowd and judges with a quiet and confident performance.

Kyle states that he "has a very simple idea with a horse and that is less is sometimes better than more." Van Hargis noted that Kyle never picked a fight with his horse and this paid off very well for him. Van remarks that Kyle was "smooth from start to finish and appeared to be confident in his plan, stayed focused on his plan and executed his plan. The result was a confident and quiet filly."

Congratulations to Kyle Hockett and to all of the contestants of the 2015 Colt Starting Challenge Finals.



**Kyle Hockett was awarded the
Van Hargis Colt Starting Saddle
made by Reinsman Products of
Circle Y.**

The Original Colt Starting Saddle

THE VAN HARGIS COLT STARTING SADDLE IS DESIGNED BY VAN HARGIS AND
NOW MANUFACTURED BY REINSMAN OF CIRCLE Y.

Master Horseman Van Hargis, saw a need many years ago for a top quality saddle design with young horses specifically in mind.

Historically, most folks starting young horses under saddle typically used an old beat up saddle to cinch up on a young horse for the first time. This was a common practice in thinking that a young horse would buck and fuss and possibly damage a saddle; therefore, it was believed that to put an old worn out saddle would minimize the risk of damaging a good valuable saddle.

Another common practice when "breaking" young horses was to saddle them a saddle with big swells and a high cantle. The thinking behind this was that the colt was going to buck and the wide swells and high cantle would make it harder to get bucked off.

Van's thinking was that it was time that a saddle be designed for the horseman starting young horses and for the horses being started. It was this thinking that lead to one of the industries greatest breakthroughs in saddle design. A saddle designed specifically for "starting" a colt under saddle rather than merely breaking a colt and bucking out a colt.

With this specific goal in mind Van considered many important factors. Firstly, was a saddle tree that he knew from experience fit a very wide range of

horses. The saddle Van used on literally thousands of young horses was stripped down to the bare tree and measurements were taken to duplicate the bars. Great attention to the bar angle and twist were of utmost importance as was the bar rock in the tree and the length of the tree. In other words, a great deal of study was done on Van's favorite saddle to determine why it fit so many horses so well.

Only a few slight modifications were done to make a good saddle tree even better. Many years of experience with young horses has taught Van countless lessons. One thing for sure, Van learned was the reasons horses buck in the first place. He has narrowed it down to two related issues: fear and pain. The fear can be addressed by a very mindful horseman by properly preparing a horse to be handled and eventually saddled. The pain, at least in regard to saddling, can be addressed by considering the many factors associated with an ill fitting saddle. Van's study and attention to many small details has addressed the issue of saddle related pain to a young horse.

Another area of great concern was the seat of the saddle. Rather than having a colt saddle designed like a bronc saddle. Van wanted a saddle designed to balance the rider over a

young horses' back just behind the withers. The seat pocket of the Van Hargis Colt Starting saddle is located low to the horse's back and just behind the withers. Additionally the stirrups are positioned directly under the seat pocket. This affords the rider to sit up over the young horse in such a way to help the youngster move out without having to compensate for a rider being out of position.

Numerous times Van Hargis has been quoted saying, "A horse only gets one first start, we owe it to him to make it the best we can give him". Over forty years experience of starting horses under saddle and countless hours studying the saddle fit and design has leant to Van Hargis creating the original Van Hargis Colt Starting Saddle, now manufactured to Van's strict specifications by Reinsman.

