

THE AUCTIONEER'S CHANT

Kade Rogge
trades rodeo arena
for auction ring

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An auctioneer's mesmerizing chant is like a song that gets stuck in the brain and never stops playing. At least that's the case for Kade Rogge, a 30-year-old auctioneer from southern Idaho. He says he used to drive his wife crazy, endlessly chanting around the house and in the truck.

"It's ridiculous ... it never stops," Rogge said.

But it's a compulsion that has sharpened his edge and earned him the title of Northwest Auctioneer Champion last year. He has also twice qualified to compete for the Livestock Marketing Association's World Auctioneer Championship, the Super Bowl of the auction world.

He didn't make it to the finals when he competed in 2016 or get past the latest qualifying competition held Oct. 1 in Kansas City, Mo., but he thinks he's getting closer.

"Obviously, I'm disappointed. I really had set high goals. But in a way, I needed it. I'm really ready to work hard this year and do better next year," he said.

The level of talent at the competition gave him a good idea of how he needs to step up his game, and he's eager to see his scores and the judges' notes to home in on the particulars.

"I'm pretty confident in my ability. At the same time, I still have a long way to go," he said.

Plans change

Rogge grew up in the auction business. His father is a farm auctioneer. His mother has long clerked at livestock auctions, and his stepfather owns Burley Livestock Auction and is a livestock auctioneer.

Nonetheless, he never thought he'd end up in the auction business. Rodeo was his first love.

"I really didn't think of any career other than that," he said.

He started team roping at the age of 7, traveling across the Northwest. He added calf roping and steer wrestling to his agenda in high school and won a rodeo scholarship to the University of Montana Western. After a year at the university, he transferred to the College of Southern Idaho — where he met his future wife, Jasmyn, and qualified for the College National Finals Rodeo.

While at CSI, his rodeo coach knew he had an auction background and wasn't afraid of a microphone and asked him to be the announcer at a roughstock clinic. That led to a growing business of announcing high school rodeos and the Cody Stampede Rodeo in Wyoming and securing Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association credentials.

But he had lost a little of his drive to compete and started working at his stepfather's livestock auction, where he realized he didn't want to work out back forever.

"I wanted to be out front auctioneering," he said.

In 2011, his parents pitched in and sent him to the Western College of Auctioneering in Billings, Mont.

"In a sense, I was just carrying on the family tradition," he said.

He had always had the gift of gab, and was never shy about talking with people. But auctioneering hadn't been part of his game plan.

"I never thought I'd be doing this, but it all kind of makes sense," he said.

Rogge's father, Ron Rogge — who won the Idaho state auctioneer competition in 2005 — said his son has been around auctions all his life. But he was also a little surprised Rogge got into the business, starting a little later than most auctioneers.

But talking in front of people has never bothered him, and he's sure done well with it, he said.

"He's always been pretty outgoing, never-met-a-stranger type of kid," he said.

Hard work

Announcing rodeos comes naturally to Rogge, but auctioneering is different. It takes a lot more practice and education, he said.

"I've had to work extremely hard, with a lot of trial-and-error and struggles," he said.

Rogge is in business with both his stepfather's livestock auction and his father's farm sales.

"Building your chant is a lot of putting things in and throwing things out."

Kade Rogge,
an auctioneer from southern Idaho



Livestock Marketing Association

Kade Rogge of Rupert, Idaho, competes in a regional qualifying event for the World Livestock Auctioneer Championship in Kansas City, Mo., on Oct. 1.



Carol Ryan Dumas/Capital Press

Auctioneer Kade Rogge inspects steers at the Burley Livestock Auction in Burley, Idaho.

An easy-listening chant is key to his job, given that buyers might be sitting at an auction for eight to 10 hours. But being trustworthy and professional are also critical. And an auctioneer has to be knowledgeable about whatever he's selling — "whether it's teacups, equipment or cattle," he said.

That's the No. 1 requirement for being a successful auctioneer, Merv May, Rogge's stepfather, said.

"And your people skills got to be pretty good. It also takes practice and work," he said.

A lot of people go to auctioneer school, but the number of them making a living in the business is fairly small, he said.

May also grew up in the auction business, having auctioneered since he was 14. He fills in for Rogge when he's away announcing rodeos and has to practice the week before to get his voice in shape.

Rogge "does a good job, and he works at it. You have to work pretty hard to improve and excel," he said.

Rogge said a love for what he does drives him to keep upping his game, and he feels fortunate to be earning his income from two enjoyable endeavors — auctioneering and rodeo announcing.

Losing his voice is his biggest worry, and he keeps up on his intake of Vitamin C — especially with a 2-year-old daughter, Rory, and a 1-year-old son, Rix.

Cough drops are another staple — and he'll need plenty of them with the fall run-up to 2,000 head a day moving through the auction barn and the new season of high school rodeo.

But improving as an auctioneer is constantly on Rogge's mind.

"I do have confidence, but at the same time I personally don't know if I'll ever be satisfied. I'll always be working at my craft and trying to improve," he said.

And he'll continue to work on his chant, which is constantly changing. He's trying to make it "smooth as glass" and easy to listen to.

It all comes down to rhythm and tone of voice, he said.

"Building your chant is a lot of putting things in and throwing things out until you get something you're confident with," he said.

He tries out different filler words and one-liners, but the foundation of his evolving chant sounds like "dotter-dow" — a variation of "dollar now."

He's also worked to improve his body language and look more professional. No more hands in his pockets or slouching — although he's still trying to curb his pointing habit after judges once nicked him for that, saying it makes buyers uncomfortable.