

Bruised Head: rodeoing began at an early age

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Clint Bruised Head is from the Blood Reservation at Stand Off, Alberta, Canada, along the Alberta-Montana border. He is a full-blooded Blood Indian and grew up on the family ranch that is still home to most of his family.

Clint reminisced about how one time his dad took his four brothers to a rodeo and his mom took his two sisters to a rodeo. He was at home tending the cows and horses. His uncle Joe came by and said there was a junior rodeo going on, and asked why he wasn't there. Clint said he didn't have a ride.

Uncle Joe said, "Well, jump on the truck, I'll take you." From then on uncle Joe would take him to rodeos, and find him rides to take him to other rodeos, sometimes making three or four in a weekend.

Later Clint started riding the Greyhound bus, but soon found that it was too slow, so he started hitchhiking.

"For me taking my rigging bag out to the highway, and going down the road hitchhiking was the biggest thing in the world. Just getting there," Bruised Head said.

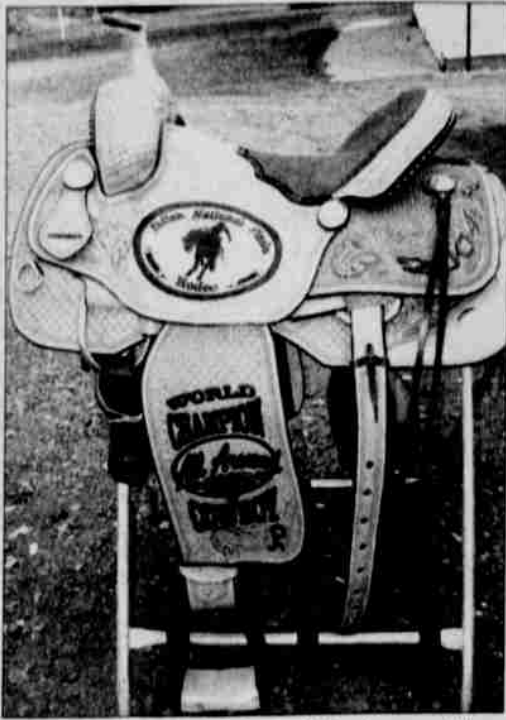
Even before junior rodeoing, the young cowboy joined the Canadian Pro Rodeo Association where he rode cows and steers.

He always wanted to be a professional cowboy and as a kid he would see his heroes at these rodeos. "Guys like Charlie Sampson and Gary Lefew. I was 'lookin' at them, and they were pulling my bull rope."

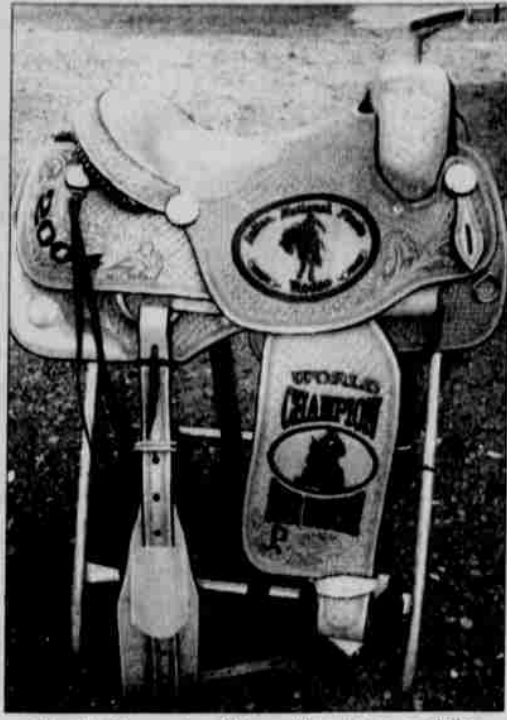
They are retired now, and Bruised Head says, "I run into them here and there, and I get to meet them. I sat down with a bunch of them at Pendleton this year, all the guys remembered the times they went to Canada and saw this little Indian kid riding, and they remember helping me pull my bull rope."

Recalling his days growing up, and how all the family enjoyed rodeo and how they worked to hone their skills, Clint said, "We couldn't keep a wild horse around the place to practice bareback or bronc riding on. We were always training, yearlings, two-year olds, whatever, we were always training. That's where horsemanship comes in. A lot of guys don't believe in horsemanship, but I do. You've got to know how to ride a horse into the box, how to score a steer, that's where horsemanship comes in."

Bruised Head has been a resident of Warm Springs for 12 years. When asked how he happened to come to Warm Springs, Clint described it this way, "I rodeoed a few times down here in the states and I saw her at a couple of rodeos. I started chasing her a little bit, and I came to Warm Springs to visit her, and



World Champion All Around Cowboy saddle



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"I love every one of those rodeos. I love being there, I love the competition, and I love the camaraderie between the cowboys."

Clint Bruised Head

I just never did leave."

The lady he talks about is his wife of ten years, Sammy (Allen) Bruised Head, who also hails from a rodeo background. The couple have three children.

During his career, Bruised Head has competed in six events. Those events included bull riding, bareback riding, bronc riding, team roping, calf roping and steer wrestling. He now concentrates on just four events. Wife Sammy says with a laugh that if he had the money he would enter all the events, but his entries are predicated by how much money they have. This year Clint and Sammy have gone to 40 rodeos.

Clint joined the Professional Cowboys Rodeo Association (PRCA) this year, so now he will compete year round. Clint says since joining the PRCA he has received outstanding support from some of the top names in the business. Moving up into the highest echelon of rodeo, Clint rides some of the top horses in the world.

Tony Currin, one of the world's best steer wrestlers from Hermiston, Ore., mounts him on his good horse, Vegas. Former bareback rider Sid Britt, from Hermiston, also provides Clint with good horses. Others who have gone out of their way to help the Indian cowboy are Brad Gleason, Luke Branquino, Spud Duval, and Bob Loomis.

Clint said, "A handful of the top cowboys in the world have helped me and made me a lot tougher than I was."

Tony Currin has taken Bruised Head under his wing and they've discussed competing in some of the top rodeos in the

world next year. Rodeos such as Cheyenne, Ft. Worth, Denver, Houston and San Antonio.

As Bruised Head talks, the enthusiasm is etched on his face, remembering how it was to junior rodeo, high school rodeo, Indian rodeo and now compete in the PRCA.

"These are rodeos I have had on my mind since I was a kid. I used to watch these guys on videos." Bruised Head said his high school rodeo coach used to catch them at lunchtime and say, "You guys don't need to sit out here and watch the sun go down."

Bruised Head continued, "He'd drag us up to the chemical lab and he'd throw on some rodeo videos. We'd watch these cowboys compete, and he'd be teaching us. He'd fast forward, slow motion, fast forward, slow motion, showing us the finer points."

One of his most memorable wins came in 1992 when he won the All-Around Championship at the Navajo Nation Fair in Window Rock, Ariz.

"I was calf roping, steer wrestling and riding bareback horses to win the all-around that year. To win the Navajo Nation Fair was really an accomplishment for me, I was a kid then and it still stands out to me," Bruised Head said.

Wife Sammy commented that it is still the greatest Indian rodeo in the United States. "Most guys call it another rodeo, but to me, every year, that was my national finals. I'd ride real hard, bulldog and rope as hard as I could."

Bruised Head said he goes back every year. He has since won the bulldogging title once and come close to winning the all around four times. He has finished second in bareback riding a number of times. Sammy said her husband threatens to come out of retirement in the bareback riding every year at the Navajo Nation Fair. Clint did miss this year's Navajo Nation Fair because of a number of conflicting PRCA rodeos in

Lyman Colliflower of Rocky Boy, Mont.

Colliflower also did the hazing for Bruised Head. This is an example of the camaraderie that Clint mentioned earlier, because while Lyman Colliflower was helping Clint, he too, was in contention for the world title.

The Bruised Head parents were in attendance at the finals. They enjoyed the opportunity to see many family members compete for top prize money.

Clint says, "My folks were plumb tickled when they heard I won the All-Around title."

Anyone who knows the personable 36-year-old cowboy is also plumb tickled. Nice guys don't always finish last. In the case of Indian World Champion All-Around Cowboy Clint Bruised Head, this nice guy has made a career out of finishing first.

Even when winning, rodeoing



Detail from the All Around World Champion saddle.

can be expensive. Clint and Sammy would like to thank the many people who sponsored their trip to the national finals. They are DMJ Warm Springs Shell Station, Warm Springs Ventures, Warm Springs Forest Products, Rodney Smith Logging, Pete Peterson Heavy Equipment Repair, Chancellor Damon of the Chance Corporation in Window Rock, Ariz., members of the community who purchased raffle tickets, and individual sponsors Frances Allen, Jo Ann Smith and Arlene Bryant.

Many winners in raffle

The following are the winners, and the items won, in the recent Clinton Bruised Head raffle.

Verleen Tom, rifle case, donated by Bruised Head. Corey Clements, shawl, donated by Sammy Bruised Head.

Dan Brisbois Jr., beaded visor, donated by Arlene Wewa Bryant. Javon Smith, picture album donated by Frances Allen.

Sissy Smith, horse blanket, donated by the Bruised Head family. Jim Coburn, boning knife, donated by the Bruised Head family.

Biff Johnson, eagle fleece throw, donated by Frances Allen. Johnny Holliday, beaded bracelet, donated by Corey Clements. Floyd Gibson, neon wall clock, donated by Frances Allen.

Theresa Morris, MK satin hands, donated by Sammy Bruised Head. Emerson Squiemphen, men's watch and pen set donated by Clinton Bruised Head.

Shane Smith, half-case of huckleberry soda, donated by Frances Allen. Caroline Torres won the Southwest necklace and bracelet donated by Sammy Bruised Head.

Wendell Jim, electronic dart board donated by the Bruised Head family. Kevin Miller, \$100, donated by Clinton Bruised Head. Eli Smith, Pendleton blanket donated by Frances Allen.

Donte Smith, Spiderman backpack donated by Frances Allen. Rhonda Green, Mary Kay Men's Collection, donated by Bridgett Whipple. Lia Suppah, Tasheena George, Kara Katchia, Shane R. Smith and Angie David won bags of jerky donated by JoAnn Smith.

Lorie Mitchell, Phill Rodda, Dan Brisbois Sr., and C. DeVaney won four pens, donated by JoAnn Smith. Roberta Queahpama won fried rice donated by JoAnn Smith.

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