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Indian National Finals Rodeo 2015 READY FOR RELEASE #4

THIS COWGIRL SMOKES HER RUNS

by Lee Allen

At a casual glance, 15-year-old Faith Holyan is a normal teenage girl with normal interests. Upon further reflection, this teen plays a special part in Indian Country rodeo --- winner of the 2014 INFR Women's All Around World Championship. Her elation included ownership of a brand-new horse trailer. Her disappointment was that she wasn't old enough to drive the truck that would pull it.

The teen sensation comes from a long family line of pro rodeo contestants. Grandpa Dean was a founding member and an early commissioner of Indian National Finals Rodeo. Dad Ed won All Around Championship Cowboy --- and Steer Wrestling Champion --- titles in the 2001 INFR and is an 8-time champion tie-down roper. Mom Carole also holds a world championship in ladies barrel racing (as well as being the only female INFR commissioner). Son Dean is another teen star who won the 2013 Junior Breakaway championship. Uncle Karl Dennison is another world champ and niece Kassidy Dennison continues to make her own mark in barrel racing.

The Holyan clan is a textbook example that Indian rodeo is a family event. "Rodeo is huge on the Navajo Nation, a way of life for a lot of people. It's just something we do," said Carole while Ed's INFR biography notes that "he gives his best effort in every run and never does things half-way."

Daughter Faith has taken up a similar mantra that can be found in her social media postings. "I dream ginormous audacious dreams," she wrote in a Twitter message while a Facebook posting advised: "Work until you no longer need to introduce yourself."

No further introduction is necessary at this point --- the buckle, the saddle, and the trailer speak to her success with more accolades waiting in the future. "No matter what, nobody can take away the dances you've already had," she posted, adding, "It's an unforgettable feeling when you smoke a run."

The Holyan family holds a very distinct place in the world of Indian rodeo. "Mom, Dad, my brother and I represent the only family where each family member has won an Indian world title," she says and enthusiastically adds that she'd like to win another title or two. "I want to go as far as I can with rodeo --- that's the plan --- with the ultimate goal of making it into National Finals Rodeo. I'm working on my mental game to prepare myself for this professional level of rodeo and a shot at a women's barrel racing title. This is a whole other level, like the NFL or the NBA, and I'm working hard to get there by the time I'm eligible at age 18."

Summer vacation doesn't have a lot of lazy days scheduled for the Coyote Canyon, New Mexico, teen titlist. "We hit the rodeo road as a family and I rodeo as much as I can. I try to take my new roping horse Shazam out for a daily exercise ride to keep both of us in shape and I try to rope as often as I can."

Continuing her succession of successes, Faith and Shazam took top honors at a rodeo over Easter, the first time she had ever ridden him. Horse and human have already bonded because of her love of animals (including Corgi dog, Beda). Into the future and college, she says: "Being a veterinarian has crossed my mind."

What is currently on her mind is centering herself for the job at hand. "There's a lot of distractions along rodeo road and it's easy to lose sight of what your goal is. But no matter what else is happening, I have a hunger to achieve and I work hard at what I do. I'd like to add another title at the INFR in November. It's early in the season, but that's the goal, and I'll stay focused and work hard to achieve it."



Faith Holyan with the horse trailer and saddle she won for Women's All-Around Champion at the 2014 Indian National Finals Rodeo.