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A Quarter Horseman-kind of Football Player

Philadelphia Eagles running back Correll Buckhalter is proud of his roan Quarter Horse stallion.

By Christine Hamilton

Philadelphia Eagles running back Correll Buckhalter



PHILADELPHIA EAGLES PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

“HE’S A FOOTBALL PLAYER-KIND OF HORSE.”

That’s what Philadelphia Eagles running back Correll Buckhalter has to say about his 2004 red roan stallion Absolutely No Doubt, aka “Roany.”

In 2008, the stallion earned a performance Register of Merit in western pleasure, won the reserve championship open performance halter stallions at the All American Quarter Horse Congress and finished in the top five in the same class at the AQHA World Championship Show.

“I like his build, his color – he’s different, calm, confident,” Correll said proudly.

Correll owns the stallion in partnership with Dan and Carol McWhirter of Doniphan, Nebraska; they bred and raised the horse. How on earth did an NFL running back get connected with Nebraska Quarter Horse breeders? Through football, of course.

Originally from Collins, Mississippi, Correll graduated from high school in 1996 and was whisked away from Southeastern Conference college football to the University of Nebraska Cornhuskers in Lincoln, Nebraska.

“I wanted to get away from home,” Correll said. “I could have gone to (Louisiana State University) or Tennessee, but I wanted to be far away from home.”

In his freshman English class, Correll made friends with Brad Johnson, who happened to own a couple of American Quarter Horses. Brad was breeding one of his mares to the stallion Good Asset out at Dan and Carol’s place in Doniphan, Nebraska. Correll had grown up helping out on his grandfather’s farm, taking care of pigs. His family rode Tennessee Walking horses and Saddlebreds, and Correll loved them.

Correll jumped at Brad’s offer to take him out to the McWhirters’.

“When (Dan and Carol) found out that I liked horses, they said whenever you want to come out, come out,”

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ZMEK PHOTOGRAPHY



A college-days visit to see Absolute Investment at the McWhirter's place – Correll Buckhalter (pictured left of Absolute Investment) used to bring along his University of Nebraska teammates to visit Dan and Carol McWhirter.



RICK CHILDRESS

Then-Nebraska Cornhusker, Correll Buckhalter, joined the McWhirter family to watch Absolute Investment win the junior western pleasure at the Nebraska Silver Classic Futurity on September 21, 1998, with AQHA Pro Horseman Cleve Wells aboard. Pictured from left are Correll, Brad Johnson, E.H. Pait (Cleve's assistant at the time), Carol and Dan McWhirter, and their son, Daniel.

Correll said, so he did.

"There used to be quite a few of us that would go out there, I used to take a lot of my college teammates. We would help them lay irrigation pipes, then we'd ride 4-wheelers and all go out to eat. We had some fun times."

Correll has been close to the McWhirter's ever since – he went with them to the 2004 AQHA Convention when their stallion The Investor was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame.

When Dan asked Correll whether he'd like to partner on a horse, it was easy for the running back to say yes. He has enjoyed the stallion's show pen success ever since.

"I don't think I'll ever show him, because I want him to win," Correll said with a laugh. "He might not win if I show him. But I'm going to get into it once I finish football. It's kind of hard now because all the good shows are during football season."

Last year was a landmark year for Correll. His first child, a son named Correll Junior, was born in September. Correll Senior had a banner year in his eighth season with the Eagles, rushing for a career-high 9.2 yards per carry and surpassing the 2,000-yard rushing mark.

And at press-time, Roany was leading the 2008 high-point standings in open performance halter stallions. The stallion will stand the 2009 season at P5 Equestrian in Henderson, Kentucky. Correll plans to breed mares of his own to the horse in the future.

In the meantime, he's looking forward to the 2009 football season. Correll takes farm-related values to every game, and they ring true for the horse business, too.

"Hard work pays off, it really does," Correll said. "That's what it taught me, being in Mississippi on a farm, because it's hard work. But you can't give up; if you give up on it, you can't get out of it what you put into it." 🐾

Christine Hamilton is editor of The American Quarter Horse Journal. To comment, write to chamilton@aqha.org.



CHRISTINE HAMILTON

Tim Finkenbinder led Absolutely No Doubt to a 2008 reserve championship in open performance halter stallions at the All American Quarter Horse Congress. The stallion by Absolute Investment and out of Shez Got Good Style by Zippos Mr Good Bar is owned by Philadelphia Eagles running back Correll Buckhalter and Dan and Carol McWhirter.

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