

## NFL Running Back Enjoys Co-Ownership of World Show Contender

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The horse show world is full of unique people from all different walks of life. Each has a different story to tell as to how they became involved in horses. Some were born into it, while others found their love and followed their dream.

Correll Buckhalter's path to the horse world is unlike anyone else. His dream was not to own horses, but to become a professional football player. Buckhalter grew up playing sports like most kids in small town, rural Mississippi, where life on the farm was commonplace. "I grew up in the country helping my grandfather who was a pig farmer," says Buckhalter. "There were horses everywhere. We rode, mainly Saddlebreds and Tennessee Walkers, and I grew comfortable around them."

Buckhalter graduated from Collins High School in 1996, and began an illustrious college career as a running back at the University of Nebraska. During his freshman year at Nebraska, Buckhalter became friends with classmate Brad Johnson. "Brad owned a couple of Quarter Horses," Buckhalter explains. "He found out that I liked horses and, well, that's how it all started."

Johnson introduced Buckhalter to some Nebraska horse friends of his, AQHA Leading Breeders, **Dan and Carol McWhirter** of Doniphan, Nebraska. "Ever since that day, Dan, Carol and I became friends. I would help out on their farm. They were very nice people and I enjoyed being around them and the horses," Buckhalter says fondly.

"Correll was a really hard working young man who we enjoyed having around the farm," says Dan McWhirter. "He obviously loved the horses then, and he still does today," adds Carol McWhirter.

At Nebraska, Buckhalter was the Huskers star running back scoring 27 touchdowns. He finished his career ranked 8th in school history for rushing yards (2,522). The Philadelphia Eagles selected him in the fourth round of the 2001 NFL draft. Now in his 8<sup>th</sup> season with the Eagles, Buckhalter has had a very successful career with one of the power house teams in the League. *(For more pictures click "Slide Show" found under the main image.)*



Photo courtesy the Philadelphia Eagles.

In 2004, Buckhalter accompanied the McWhirter's to the AQHA Convention in Reno, Nevada, for the Hall of Fame induction of their legendary stallion, The Investor. "That was really interesting and I enjoyed myself," said Buckhalter.



Carol remembers "Correll joining us at the Convention for The Investor's big night was so exciting. We had special tables reserved for our friends and Correll sat with us. His being there made the evening even more special especially since Correll personally knew The Investor from when he would come out to help out on the farm".

Around the time of the AQHA Convention, "Dan asked me if I ever wanted to get into the horse business, and I told him I did," explains Buckhalter. "The McWhirter's raised a really nice stud prospect that they asked me to partner on. So I went into partnership with them on "Roany" (Absolutely No Doubt), and it has been a lot of fun."

Absolutely No Doubt is a 2004 double registered AQHA/APHA red roan stallion by Absolute Investment out of Shez Got Good Style by Zippos Mr Good Bar. Earlier this year, Absolutely No Doubt accumulated 20 AQHA western pleasure points qualifying him to compete in performance halter. To date, Absolutely No Doubt is leading the nation by a commanding margin for the AQHA Honor Roll title in both the Open and Junior Divisions in Performance Halter Stallions.

"We're proud of Roany's accomplishments and he is so magnetic," says breeder, Carol McWhirter. "He develops a fan club wherever he goes. People love him because of his kind, docile nature. He just wants to be good. His laid-back attitude makes him easy to show in both western pleasure and halter."

"I've never ridden Roany, I don't want to mess him up," Buckhalter says half jokingly. "But Dan calls me every time he shows. I have his first Grand Champion trophy right next to my football trophies and I have pictures of him on my wall," says the proud co-owner.

In October, Absolutely No Doubt was crowned Reserve Champion at the 2008 Congress in the Open Performance Halter Stallions. Buckhalter now hopes to add another trophy to his shelf, an AQHA World Championship trophy. "Roany's showing at the World Show in the Open Performance Halter Stallions. I think he has a really good chance."

Looking ahead, Buckhalter plans to dabble in the horses and "After I retire, I would like to get more involved," says the 8-year NFL veteran. "I don't want to have my own farm, but I would like to own some broodmares and breed them to Roany."

As for Roany, The McWhirter's are excited about his future in the breeding shed after "test-breeding" two mares. Both of his 2008 foals are roan and obvious descendants of McWhirter's Absolute Bloodlines in conformation, movement and mind. They're looking forward to more foals in 2009.

Absolutely No Doubt will stand at P5 in Henderson, Kentucky, for the 2009 breeding season and is enrolled in the KY Breeders Incentive in both the AQHA and APHA programs. For more information on Absolutely No Doubt, visit the website <http://www.absolutebloodlines.com/> and <http://www.danmcwhirter.com/>.