



## KEY COMMENTS

Justin McKee

# ABBI Junior Futurities: Family Fun AND The Future of Our Sport

I'm glad I went to Ardmore because it is there that I saw the true potential of the ABBI.

My daughter Kassidy had a calf entered in the Junior Futurity and I realized there that the future isn't in the Futurity, Classic or Derby systems. It is all about the Junior Futurities—that is the real future of the ABBI. If we do our part in getting the word out, the big entry numbers in the future will come from the youth futurities as many young people will use their futurity bulls as 4-H and FFA projects.

While in Ardmore it dawned on me how much fun not only my 9-year-old daughter was having, but how much fun my wife and I were having. We all have interests and hobbies outside of bucking bulls. But even the first time Kassidy bucked her futurity calf in the practice pen and he fell down and didn't do so good, it was still better than baseball or showing steers or junior rodeo or fishing or any of the things we do out here in the country. We had grandmas and grandpas, aunts and uncles, and neighbors all there to support her. Anything people do around here, this has it beat 10 to 1 in terms of excitement.

And when we get down there to the Junior Futurity in Ardmore, it was even more exciting. I've been on TV for years now, and the first time I was on NBC doing the PBR I was pretty nervous. And most recently, watching Ty Murray on Dancing with the Stars made me real nervous. But I've never been so nervous as I was watching my daughter's futurity calf buck—that just added to the excitement.

We had to check in two days early. We had to check in on Thursday and the Junior Futurity wasn't until Saturday. Now we have a million things to do at the ranch, and every day at home counts when I have to take off down the road again soon (with the PBR). I didn't want to check in that early. But it turned out to be a great thing. It gave us a chance to catch up with friends of ours and it turned into a little family vacation.

(ABBI President) Russ Gant did a great job introducing all the kids and giving everyone a chance to know each other. I'm sure most of us left Ardmore with new friends.

Russ told me in Ardmore that this is the only activity all three of his kids do together. Outside of bucking bulls, his children all have different interests, but bucking bulls is



Justin McKee had to hold his daughter Kassidy by her ankles so she could flank her bull in Ardmore. glanville photo

our kids now will benefit us all in the long run.

I spoke to Andee (Lamoreaux), J.W. (Hart) and Toby (Floyd) in Ardmore and they all had some really good ideas and insights as to how we can grow the youth program. I know there are so many other ABBI members who also have good ideas and are also willing to support our kids. If you want to donate, get more involved or have a great idea please don't hesitate to call up the ABBI and lend a hand.

Most of the kids in Ardmore came from bucking bull families. But if we can reach out to FFA members and the kids who show animals, we can grow our sport immensely. Every purebred animal association is driven by the youth association. From the Angus youth on down the line to pigs, goat, sheep- that is what drives these industries, the kids. The future of the ABBI is also with our kids.

what brings his family all together. It was so enlightening to me, because this is also what my family loves to do together. It may be the kids who get prizes at these junior futurities, but the real winners are the families.

I really think we can make the junior events bigger and better. I'm hoping we can do something special in Las Vegas for the top two Junior Futurity bulls from each event. And if we can get those Junior Futurity bulls on TV it would be great for our junior members and for our sport. We can all come together to find ways to help the Junior Futurities. As we know, the heifer market is slow right now. There is no reason why more breeders can't donate a heifer to these junior breeders who could use one for their breeding program. The investment we make in

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