

JNHE Showmanship: Dreams and Tradition

JNHE champion senior showman Mason Allan fulfilled his lifelong goal to win the honor and carried on a family tradition of excellence in the showing.

by *Katie Maupin Miller*

Showmanship is a tradition in the Allan family. Much like the stockmanship they use at Bar A Cattle Company, the family passes it down from one member to the next.

Mason Allan of Nocona, Texas, carried on the Allan tradition of showing savviness when he topped the VitaFirm® Junior National Hereford Expo (JNHE) senior showmanship. He follows his dad, Dave, who was reserve in 1990; his uncle, Mark, who won in 1985; and older brother Tyler, who garnered the honor in Grand Island, Neb., in 2018.

“It means everything to me,” Mason says of the honor. “I’ve dreamt of this forever, and it’s just really near and dear to my family’s heart.”

Working hard

Don’t think Mason’s win is anyone’s but his own, though — halter holding may be a family tradition, but the hours Mason spent preparing for the coveted class were all his. Since he



Mason’s older brother, Tyler, hugs him after winning senior showmanship. Tyler topped the class in 2018, and the brothers are the second generation of Allans to garner such honors.

was a child, Mason says his goal was to win JNHE senior showmanship. Starting at 3 years old, he watched every Hereford senior showmanship

competition, studying the competitors and their technique. Whether they won or lost, Mason noticed each exhibitor’s skills, ways to prepare and mannerisms, and he slowly realized the habits all successful showmen seemed to share. Mason believes the best place for young showmen to learn is ringside.

“Find someone who you are inspired by, and someone who you think does a great job and watch their every move,” Mason says. “I know there are tons of people I look up to; I’ve looked up to since I was little. And I think if you find someone that you’re truly inspired by, if you watch them — each and everything they do — I think that’ll lead you to success.”

While ringside may be a great place to learn, the barn is where you put it into action, and that’s where you’ll



Mason’s showmanship skills were on display all week. Here he presents his heifer in the owned female show on Friday.



Mason watched the JNHE senior showmanship finals for years, studying what separated successful showmen from their peers. Those ringside lessons paid off as a calm, cool and collected Mason presented his heifer to top honors during the showmanship final.

find Mason. In addition to feeding and rinsing his show calves each day, Mason works with every animal, setting them up and perfecting their training — at least 15 minutes a day. The month before JNHE, Mason worked his showmanship heifer, the bred-and-owned BACC Hadley, for 30 minutes each day.

Family success

BACC Hadley also carried on a bit of tradition, as her dam was Tyler's 2018 showmanship heifer that helped him grab the senior showman honor. Consequently, BACC Hadley is also a family favorite in the Allan barn.

"She's one of my most favorite creatures I've ever had. She's extremely gentle, but she knows when she goes in the showring to act like a show cow. She throws her ears forward, always has her feet right," Mason says. "I think it was cool to win, but it's even cooler to win with one I've been around since the first day she was born."

The Allan family's work on Bar A Cattle Company has made them a force to be reckoned with in the Hereford ring, whether it's in the show or during showmanship. And that was very clear at Grand

Island in 2018. That year, Tyler topped the senior showmanship division, Mason won intermediate showman and then grabbed reserve grand champion honors in the heifer show. In 2018, the Allans brought four heifers to junior nationals, and

the family left with four division winners, a reserve grand champion and two showmanship champions.

"That was probably the coolest week of my life," Mason says.

Unsurprisingly with such close-knit family success, Mason says his parents are some of his biggest mentors. His dad taught him everything he knows cattle-wise, and his mom, Becky, set an example of organization and task-oriented productivity. Mason's family and their values set the bar for the work ethic he needed to be successful in the showring, but before Mason started working for the honor, he was dreaming of it.

Visualizing success

Scarcely a week passed when Mason didn't think about his goal. In the days before the showmanship competition, thoughts of the contest kept him awake. When Mason finally drifted to sleep, it was while he imagined the upcoming contest — visions of a showmanship championship lulling him to sleep. That dream pushed him to spend the long hours needed to prepare.

"I was up till 3 in the morning, and I was just picturing every single detail and running the scenarios through my mind over and over and over again,"



Mason's skills and preparation, both in and out of the showring, clipped away the competition during this year's JNHE senior showmanship contest.

“I think if you find someone that you’re truly inspired by, if you watch them — each and everything they do — I think that’ll lead you to success.”

— Mason Allan

he says. “I just concluded, however I did, as long as I did my best, that’s all that mattered.”

For Mason, it wasn’t hard to visualize winning senior showmanship. Last year, he was named reserve champion senior showman behind close family friend and fellow Texas Hereford youth, Rylee Barber. While being named reserve is undoubtedly a noteworthy feat, it drove Mason even harder to take the honor.

“After being reserve last year, it kind of lit a fire in me to just strive for perfection. And since that day, it was always in the back of my mind,” he says.

Rylee’s brother, Bryden, stood reserve behind Mason this year, and was one of the first to congratulate him on his showmanship win. The two showmen embraced after the



Family friend, fellow Texas Hereford youth and reserve senior showman Bryden Barber was the first to congratulate Mason after his showmanship win. Their embrace shows that sportsmanship will always be an important component of showmanship, no matter how determined the competitors.

class’s final handshakes. Like many Hereford youth, their showmanship is only rivaled by their sportsmanship, and even the fiercest competitors are often lifelong friends chasing their goals together and cheering each other on along the way.

You could safely say that Mason made his dreams into thoughts and his thoughts into plans of action to meet his goals. If Mason was nervous as judges

Jerrod and Blayne Arthur slowly shook each of the top ten showmen’s hands, he didn’t show it. He calmly and confidently continued to present BACC Hadley as the number of contenders were whittled around him – tenth, ninth, eighth, seventh ... until the judges finally shook the senior champion showman’s hand, and all his years of preparation paid off.

Mason joins the ranks of the senior showman champions who came before him — stockmen and women he has always looked up to and admired as the habits they made showing cattle helped them find success in their adult life. In the future, Mason plans to attend Redlands Community College and join their collegiate livestock judging team before continuing his education and judging career at a four-year university.

For now, though, the 17-year-old just feels a surreal mix of accomplishment and relief to carry on an Allan family tradition of excellence.

“I think the biggest thing is relief. I’ve been working so hard for this since I was a kid, and I’ve watched the people before me go on and be successful,” he says. **HW**



Mason pulls legs as he competes in the fitting portion of the JNHE senior showmanship final.

Editor’s note: Thanks to Next Level for sharing your JNHE photos with *Hereford World* for publication.