



## Where Are They Now – Amber Nusser

Amber Nusser hit the spotlight in the inaugural Youth Freestyle Reining Showcase (YFRS) in 2019, along with Daisy Kaufman and Kaylynn Sheldon. Hardly new to the equine world, the 17-year old demonstrated her reining talent with her mare, Smiley, a dun reiner, performing to a medley from “Grease”.



We caught up with Amber to find out where her life has taken her since her memorable performance at the National Western Stock Show (NWSS). After graduating high school, Smiley joined Amber for her freshman year of college at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis), where she continues as a valuable member of the competitive D1 Equestrian Team on the reining squad.

Since participating in the YFRS, Amber explains the Stock Show influenced her decision to pursue college athletics.

Participating in the Showcase gave Amber the courage she needed to apply and try out for the UC Davis Equestrian Team. It also helped her get over her nerves and perform in front of a large crowd.

Growing up, Amber was very active in different equestrian associations and clubs. For 10 years she was part of the Boulder County 4-H Horse Program which introduced her to the NWSS and the YFRS. Amber was also a member of the Boulder County 4-H Judging Team for three years and the Rocky Mountain Wranglers IEA Team for two years.

As an exhibitor, Amber’s favorite part of Stock Show was actually being a part of it. Before applying, her 4-H Club would come to Stock Show every year and watch the RAM Invitational Freestyle Reining. Being on the “other side” as an exhibitor was a weird and wonderful feeling for her. “Actually being able to see what goes on behind the scenes, planning it out and just performing and being a part of a HUGE event there was absolutely amazing!” Amber commented.

Not only did Amber participate in the YFRS, she also volunteered at the Stock Show as part of the Royalty Program. Amber was Boulder County 4-H Princess in 2017 followed by Lady in Waiting and Queen in 2019 and 2020. The volunteering aspect of the Stock Show allowed Amber to give back to the community and teach others the value of agricultural education. She expressed how unique the Stock Show is to Colorado and how it provides an amazing platform to talk about agriculture, horses, and animals. Being able to share her knowledge with others was a unique and wonderful experience that the Stock Show provided her.



The YFRS allows youth from Colorado and Wyoming to demonstrate their skills in freestyle reining during a prestigious event at the National Western Stock Show. Amber believes the youth programs at NWSS are truly there for youth development and provide cool opportunities for youth to be involved. Amber feels the Youth Programs aren’t just resume boosters, but are available to help develop life skills, such as leadership and confidence. Her best advice for people thinking about applying is to just apply. In Amber’s opinion there is nothing else like the National Western Stock Show!

To learn more about the Youth Freestyle Reining Showcase, visit <https://nationalwestern.com/horse-shows/horse-exhibitors/horse-youth-programs/>

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