

## Freshman had an easy time learning the ropes of varsity football

Written by George Browning

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Lane McPheeters started his freshman year in August as a key contributor to the West Washington football team.

He was able to do that for a number of reasons. First, he prepared himself in the weight room during the off-season to compete against older, more physically mature, boys. Secondly, his experience competing in national rodeo competitions had him mentally up to the challenge of playing football on Friday nights.

Not only does Lane compete on a national level, but he does more than his fair share of winning, including a national roping title this year.

. "We went to the state of New Mexico where he won the national title," said Lane's dad Chuck McPheeters. "It's the first time anyone from Indiana has ever accomplished that. That's a big thing for anyone east of the Mississippi (River) to accomplish."

Lane's success hasn't come over-night, he said he has been roping for as long as he can remember.

"(I started) as soon as I started walking, because, my dad, he ropes and as soon as I got old enough to start doing everything he started teaching me," Lane said. "I started junior rodeo when I was in Kindergarten, and then came all the way up through eighth grade and I am going on into the high school (division) now."

Rodeo is his first love, football is just something Lane does to pass the time. He said he gets to keep his roping skills sharp while football is going on by practicing in the family's 80' by 200' indoor roping arena a couple nights a week.

"Whenever football is around that is kind of like my off-season for rodeo because I can't practice every single night for two or three hours like I want to," he said. "So, during football I'll probably rope the heel o'matic (a device to help him practice) two or three nights a week after football and then go to some smaller roping competitions close to home on the weekends. I just slow down a little bit during football season."

After football season, Lane turns all of his attention back to rodeo. He is a true student of the sport.

"I try to rope with other people as much as I can," Lane said. "I usually do roping at my house because we have the indoor barn and cattle. Any time I can rope with someone who is as good or better than I am I try to rope with them just so I can pick things up and make myself better."

Besides the national title, that kind of work ethic has led Lane to an estimated 50 to 60 belt buckles, saddles and he estimates \$8 to \$9,000 in and cash prizes.

And it's not all about winning, Lane said he enjoys the friendships he has made participating in the sport, as well.

"At my age, if you're good at it, you can make a lot of money real quick, and plus your friends are all there," Lane said. "You can hang out with everybody and have a good time."

Chuck said there is no limit to what his son can accomplish.

"He can basically achieve whatever he sets his mind to," Chuck said. "He's very talented. To make it in the rodeo profession you have to be very talented and hardworking. You certainly have to be dedicated to it because it's very physically demanding, calf roping and steer

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wrestling is.”

Lane’s up-side is not limited to the rodeo arena, with a win last Friday the West Washington football team will now play for a regional championship Friday at home against Linton-Stockton.

That’s another prize, Lane would like to help his team rope back to Campbellsburg.

Special Correspondent Aaron Little contributed to this story.