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“If you start treating those colts after they’re born, you’re too late.”

A Humble Champion: NRHA Hall of Fame inductee Bob Loomis on his life, legacy, and the breakthrough that changed the path of his breeding program.

The legends of the horse industry—the men and women that paved the way, changed thinking, and rode outside the lines—not for the glory, but because they saw a better way. Among those names is a man whose mark will forever be imprinted on the world of reining horses. His vision runs in the greatest bloodlines to slide across the arena, and he’s forever changed the course of the sport he loves.

The man is Bob Loomis, and the legacy is over 50 years of time-tested success in the show pen. World championships—12 to be exact and six NRHA Open Futurity Championships—and accolades have followed him wherever he’s gone. Still, after it all, the thing that drives him isn’t the titles or the esteem, it’s the horses, pure and simple. “When I was 23 years old in 1966, that’s

when I started training professionally,” he remembers, “and I’ve loved every minute of it since.” It’s a love that has built the man, built the dream, and built the legend.

Anyone who knows Bob Loomis knows a humble champion who has lived out the history of the NRHA from day one. “I’ve been at every NRHA Futurity since 1967,” says Loomis, “the reining industry has been so good to me, I’ve been so blessed.” It’s been a long and storied career that has taken him from the show pen to a breeding program that has influenced the very blood running through today’s reining greats. “My breeding program started because I had such a passion for it, and nobody was breeding the kind of horses I wanted to ride.” He’s a thinker and a constant student of the horse,

To Bob Loomis, his horses are his greatest accomplishment. Meet him and you’ll know that it isn’t just champion bloodlines that make this man a legend.



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learning, adapting, and evolving his program to create today's babies and tomorrow's champions.

"Bob is somebody I've learned a great deal from; he's pioneered so much in the industry," says Dr. Tyler Troop, DVM, a close friend and integral part of the veterinary team at Loomis Ranch. Together, Dr. Troop and Loomis have fought hard and won, against one of the great challenges of Loomis' breeding career, OCDs. Osteochondritis Dissecans (OCD) results in the fragmentation of cartilage and bone, and allows for these fragments to move about within the joint capsule, causing potential damage, pain, and lameness. These career-ending results have sidelined some of the sport's most promising young prospects. "We work so hard to provide the best foundation possible for these mares, for the babies in utero, and then once they're on the ground," says Bob. "You can have a great horse, but if they don't vet check clean it's such a disappointment."

"Bob was convinced that OCDs should be handled with the mares first, then be addressed in utero," says Dr. Troop. "He knew that nutrition could be a game changer, and that's where he focused." Loomis had always fed the best quality hay available, and relied on a select few supplements to fill the nutritional gaps he knew that hay alone couldn't compensate for. "I've always believed that nutrition is so important, and I've been a fanatic about the quality of our feeding program since the day I started out," adds Loomis. He and Dr. Troop looked to nutrition to play a central role in combating the OCD challenge. "We have the mares on a high-quality forage diet and the same two supplements, Platinum Performance Equine and Platinum Osteon, which gives them the added trace minerals specifically for their bones," says Loomis. Mares are kept on the feeding program continuously prior to breeding, while in foal, which Loomis insists is the key—and after foaling. "It all starts with the mares," says Loomis, "if you start treating those colts after they're born, you're too late."

Dr. Troop and Loomis make an excellent team, with a shared vision and two different approaches. "My perspective is science based," says Dr. Troop, "and his is fact based. You need both to get the job done. The answer isn't always in a scientific journal or something that's been

done and documented; sometimes you have to find the answer yourself." Dr. Troop visits the ranch every other day to check on the horses, a job that according to him, is made simple due to Loomis' commitment. "Bob is the kind of client that makes my job easy, his compliance is gold standard. He does everything he can, and these horses get what they're supposed to get without fail." What they get is a top-tier nutrition program and the care that comes from a lifetime of experience paired with dedicated veterinarians. "We're now in our third

year of clean yearlings out of mares that had never had a foal without an OCD," Dr. Troop says proudly. It's a remarkable result that stems from a theory, "I'm convinced you're dealing with a genetic factor," says Bob. "I'm positive there are certain families that are more prone to OCDs, and the only way I know how to influence genes is through nutrition."

It's clear that Dr. Troop holds a tremendous respect for his friend and client, particularly his

willingness to think, try, and press on for the betterment of his horses. Ask him, and Loomis is quick to offer deep appreciation, "Tyler is a wonderful help to our operation, and he and his wife are like part of our family." It's a closeness that has no doubt played a role in their success at Loomis Ranch. "Good veterinarians are so important to a program," adds Loomis, "and between Dr. Troop, Dr. Lane Easter, and Dr. David Hartman, I've been blessed to have the very best. They're dear friends."

After 50-plus years as a dominating force in the industry he loves, Loomis is happy to now focus solely on his breeding program and 2 year olds. It's what he loves—breeding good horses, and constantly working to make them better, healthier, and more successful in the show pen and beyond. "All I know is, it works," Loomis says of their program, which recently merged with NRHA Corporate Partner Silver Spurs Equine in Scottsdale, Arizona. It's a merger that Loomis feels will only produce better horses, "Two of our studs, Smokin Whiz and Cromed Out Mercedes will be standing at my ranch in Oklahoma, and the others will be with Michael and Michelle Miola in Arizona at Silver Spurs. They're passionate about horses, and I'm really looking forward to working with them." ♦



Bob Loomis (L) and Dr. Tyler Troop (R)