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Poppino has weekly radio show

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BIG CABIN — The road to the National Finals Rodeo is a long one. Tana Poppino, Big Cabin, has reached the end twice. Despite some setbacks, it looks as if she will get to Las Vegas again this year.

Poppino is home now, resting her horses and regrouping before she travels to Fort Madison, Iowa, Sept. 10. Her bay gelding is out until the end of September. She will call on her gray gelding, but that's not a problem. He outran a record number of entries, 236, to win the Fort Worth Stock Show Rodeo in February. That was good for a \$14,000 - and change - paycheck.

Barrel racers on the road are constantly checking their horses for signs of soreness, extreme fatigue or an injury which has not yet caused a problem. When that happens, the horse has to have rest and rehabilitation if he is continue performing at the professional level. Injured horses develop bad habits to compensate for injuries.

"He (the gray horse, Goose) got some problems I needed to work out and Amigo was down, so I came home," Poppino said.

Despite the short time off, Poppino is still solid in the Women's Professional Rodeo Association standings. Tuesday the website listed her at 10th, having won \$55,582.38 at 58 rodeos.

"I think we'll make it, but it'd sure be helpful if we'd get a few more thousand won," Poppino said.

Poppino is a fierce competitor, but she also works diligently to educate people about rodeo and life on the road with horses. She has a weekly Internet radio show on SpurRadio.com at 1 p.m. Tuesdays. "We're trying to give people a little look into road life," Poppino said. "Educate the public about rodeo."

Along with the radio show, Poppino has been working with young people's organizations. At the American Royal in Kansas City last year, she presented a program to Girl Scouts who were able to earn a badge for the experience. "We went to the car race and the girls got to meet with women drivers. They got to meet Sara Evans at the Royal.

"I want to teach them rodeo is not the bad guy scenario animal rights people think it is. I want to help them understand rodeo events mirror real work on the ranch."

She makes a good spokesperson. She should. She worked in public relations and communications at Grand River Dam Authority before hitting the rodeo trail full time.

Poppino's hauling partner, Jeanne Anderson, White City, Kan., will likely get a spot in Las Vegas, too. She is currently ranked number 11 and has won \$51,148.

Poppino finished eighth in the world in 2006 and 14th in 2007. She is the wife of Marty Poppino, also a rodeo competitor and owner of Cowboy Rigs trailer sales and service. Her son Brodie graduated from Adair High School last year. He

competes in calf roping, team roping and steer wrestling.