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## Tana Poppino is taking care of business

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Wednesday, July 28, 2010

Brandon Westphal  
Greeley, Colo.

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Tana and Amigo winning in Guymon, Okla. 2010.  
Photo by Cowboy Images. Courtesy of Donnell Rodeo  
Greeley. She's competed at the Dodge National Circuit Finals Rodeo, and in 2007 she won the \$100,000 grand prize at Canada's Calgary Stampede. Tana qualified for the National Finals Rodeo (NFR) in 2006 and again in 2007.

Tana Poppino is in the barrel racing business. She, along with horses Perryman Star, better know as "Amigo," and Doc Hickorys Cross, aka "Goose," are off to a very good start this year. Poppino, of Big Cabin, Okla., is ranked 5th in The Women's Professional Rodeo Association (WPRA) world standings and is fresh off a win at the "World's Largest 4th of July Rodeo" in Greeley, Colo. (the Greeley Independence Stampede).

Poppino's introduction to horses came the day she first arrived home at the ranch. She was raised outside of tiny Kim, Colo., and learned to ride early on. Her first occupation was that of a ranch hand. Riding horses and working cattle are in her blood. "I've always been a cowgirl," says Tana. "I was raised on the back of a horse. They're great to gather cattle on, but my competitive streak led me to more than just that." Her "competitive streak" has led to much more indeed. Poppino's rodeo earnings exceed \$400,000 and she's won some of the biggest rodeos in the country and on the continent, and has qualified twice for the most prestigious rodeo in the world. In her native Colorado, she's won Denver, Colorado Springs and now

Professional sports are big business and rodeo is no different. Tana's keenly aware of the fact that in barrel racing, you're only as good as your horses. "I've been very blessed to have first Amigo and now Goose somehow end up with me," says Poppino. "I pray for wisdom and for the right people to come along, and I'm thankful for receiving a little of both in my career." The level of care required for high performance horses took a little getting used to for the ranch hand turned rodeo star. Horses, like everything and everybody on the ranches around Kim, are required to be tough. Massage therapy and equine chiropractic are not often prescribed for cow ponies. Barrel horses, however, are a different story. "It took me three years on the road to figure out how to really take care of my horses," admits Poppino. "Finding nice horses that can compete is tough, so when you get one or two you can count on you have to take care of them. In my situation it's crucial they're healthy and sound. I'm not able to spend a ton on prospects, back-ups, or replacements, so I've got to do the best with what I have."

Tana's best continues to pay off. After spending the last two years on injured reserve - with Amigo out after surgery in 2008 and Tana out with a broken ankle much of last year - Poppino is back to work full-time again. Prior to winning the Stampede, she placed at several big winter rodeos in Texas, including: Austin, Nacogdoches, Marshall, Bay City, San Angelo, and Houston. Tana won in Guymon, Okla., earlier this year achieved another career milestone in February with a win at the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo.

After Greeley, Poppino noticed stiffness in both Amigo and Goose. A visit to the veterinarian confirmed both were in need of some rest before returning to the arena. For now, Tana is back at home taking care of her horses - which are the business.

For updates and more information on Tana and "Team Amigo," please visit [www.TanaPoppino.com](http://www.TanaPoppino.com).

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