

She backed into the roping box slowly and adjusted her saddle.

With a nod of her head the chute gates opened, and she charged down the pen on her horse and threw her loop swiftly to catch the calf's neck.

She whipped her head around to see the clock stopped at 2.8 seconds and patted her horse's neck.

Chloe Tadlock smiled as the video played on her phone on a loop.

Tadlock is a sophomore agricultural communications major from Lubbock, Texas.

Tadlock said she quit running track and cross-country in high school so she could start riding horses.

"I feel like people are surprised when I tell them I haven't been riding very long," Tadlock said. "I didn't start roping until my sophomore year of high school."

Tadlock said she does not come from a large agricultural or rodeo background.

"One day the old ranch horse coach, who helped me learn how to ride, asked if I wanted to come rope the dummy with them," Tadlock said. "I was like 'Sure. I don't know what I'm really doing, but sure.'" and it just kind of escalated from there."

Tadlock is currently on the Texas Tech rodeo team and competes in the breakaway roping.

According to the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association website, Tech's women's rodeo team is tied for first place in the overall standings.

Tadlock said it's hard balancing school and rodeo because of the time commitment both activities require.

"It's definitely a lot because with horses you never know, it's always something," Tadlock said. "Every week I never know what's going to happen because they are very accident prone."

Tadlock said her main horse died in the middle of the fall rodeo season right before Tech hosted their annual rodeo.

"I feel like it has really helped me keep things in perspective," Tadlock said. "Even if things aren't going how I would like at the rodeo I'm just grateful my horses are healthy."

Kelly Williford Tadlock, Chloe's mom, said Chloe was offered to ride other rodeo team member's horses but turned the offers down to focus on her backup horse.

"She could've withdrawn from the rodeo and not even tried," Williford Tadlock said, with tears streaming down her face. "I was so proud because she got on Two Chainz and took a shot."

Williford Tadlock said she sees a bright future for Chloe in the rodeo industry teaching others and pushing herself.

"She had a lot of good people around her and teaching her," Williford Tadlock said. "And I feel like she's also really good about paying it forward and wanting to help others the way she was helped."

Tadlock said she is looking forward to finishing out the rest of the collegiate rodeo season and seeing where her young horses take her.

"Just looking back at how far I've been able to come and progress in a short period of time," Tadlock said. "It keeps me motivated and thinking about how much more I'll be able to progress."

Side Bar:

Texas Tech rodeo team member Chloe Tadlock first picked up a rope less than 5 years ago after a former Tech ranch horse team coach offered her lessons.

Tadlock said she was given the opportunity to ride family friend's horses before she got her first horse.

"The old ranch horse coach, Chance O'Neal, he helped me and taught me how to ride," Tadlock said. "He got me started in roping."

Kelly Williford Tadlock, Chloe's mom, said her family was new to the rodeo industry and didn't know what they were doing.

"She wanted a horse for her birthday, and I ended up giving her a stuffed horse with a note on it that said, 'This will have to do for now.'" Williford Tadlock said. "Her dad thought that was just awful and said, 'We're getting that girl a horse' and that's when we got her Chico."

Williford Tadlock said it is exciting even when Chloe doesn't do well because of how far she has come.

Tadlock said she couldn't have gotten this far without the support she's received from her family and coaches.

"When my dad would come to a roping with me, I used to be really shy," Tadlock said. "He would always make friends with everyone or somehow know someone there even though he wasn't involved in it growing up."

Tadlock said if her dad wasn't at a roping then he would make sure someone was at the roping looking out for her.

"Just knowing what I do now and with the people I have around me now helps keep everything in perspective for me," Tadlock said.

Sources:

Chloe Tadlock - chloe.tadlock@ttu.edu

Kelly Williford Tadlock

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Research:

<http://www.collegerodeo.com/standings/2014-2015-southwest-region-standings/>