

Margaret Derr

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4-H, teamwork, and the Super Bowl

When I reflect on the recent Super Bowl, one thought that really sticks out is the importance of teamwork and how that directly relates to the 4-H program. Patrick Mahomes did not make it to the Super Bowl on his own; he had to learn to work with and for his team and believe that achieving the highest goal in football, was a total team effort.

When you think about it, this concept is very similar to the teamwork required when it comes to 4-H. As much as 4-H is an individual “sport”, there are also many aspects of 4-H where the idea of teamwork applies. When I was in 4-H, I showed horses and pigs. Many people do not understand what goes into getting ready for horse and swine competitions. For example, when I was competing in horse shows, I would ride both of my horses the night before, with a very specific goal at that point. I also had to prepare and groom them at the latest moment possible, which included clipping, combing, braiding, washing and then finally blanketing my horses. I usually used body sheets and mane/tail wraps to try to keep them clean throughout the night. My mare is a light gray (which is exceptionally challenging), so this kept me very busy. I would keep them in the barn and just hope and pray they didn’t roll and undo all of my efforts! The morning of the show, I would go out early for damage control! Sometimes I would have to rewash my horse or at the very least, spot scrub and clean. Then we loaded the trailer, hauled to the show, unloaded, and then tacked up and head to the warm up pen. Before our first event and after warm ups, we groomed again and if appropriate, braided manes and tails. After a usually very long day, we headed home, but the work and team effort was not done. The trailer needed

cleaned, the horses needed cared for, tack, equipment and clothes all needed cleaned and put away. And oftentimes, we would get up and repeat the next day!

I share all of this to point out this is not just me doing all of the preparation and work. I may be the rider/competitor, but this is a team project from start to finish. My parents and family helped me so much, that I cannot ever thank them enough. If they were not there, I would not have been able to compete, including all of the financial obligations owning and showing horses bring. I am so thankful I have a team when it comes to showing animals, and even with life itself!

Please know and remember that showing any animal requires the same teamwork effort, especially when we talk about 4-H clubs! As mentioned above, as much as 4-H is an individual “sport”, there are many aspects people who are not showing themselves, do not see. The teamwork between your club members, peers, other clubs, volunteers, parents, grandparents, family, extension and anyone else involved, is what makes 4-H so unique and a fantastic experience! No matter the project!!

If you have any questions about 4-H and teamwork, please feel free to contact me at Margaret.derr@unl.edu or 308.236.1235. Thank you! And a good reminder: If you’re already in 4-H and show animals or any other project, please make sure you thank those that stay in the shadows, help in the background, and cheer you on from the sidelines!!