

Angus Meets Football

NFL player shares love of Angus and life lessons with parents and juniors.

Story & photos by Corinne Blender

A cattle show may seem like an odd event at which to find a professional football player. But for Quentin Neujahr, backup center for the Denver Broncos, it is home sweet home.

Neujahr spoke at the opening ceremonies of the 2001 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo.

Growing up on an Angus ranch near Surprise, Neb., which Neujahr says has population of 54, he had his own experiences with showing. Angus cattle presented a way for him to spend time with his father.

As an order buyer traveling across the nation, Neujahr's father had little time to spend with his children. However, he

was able to make time for Angus cattle, which became a big part of their relationship, Neujahr says.

For the parents

Since Angus cattle provided a connection between him and his father, he directed a majority of his speech toward the parents, stressing the importance of spending time with their children.

"If anything, I wanted to touch base with the parents," Neujahr says. "Hopefully, they were listening."

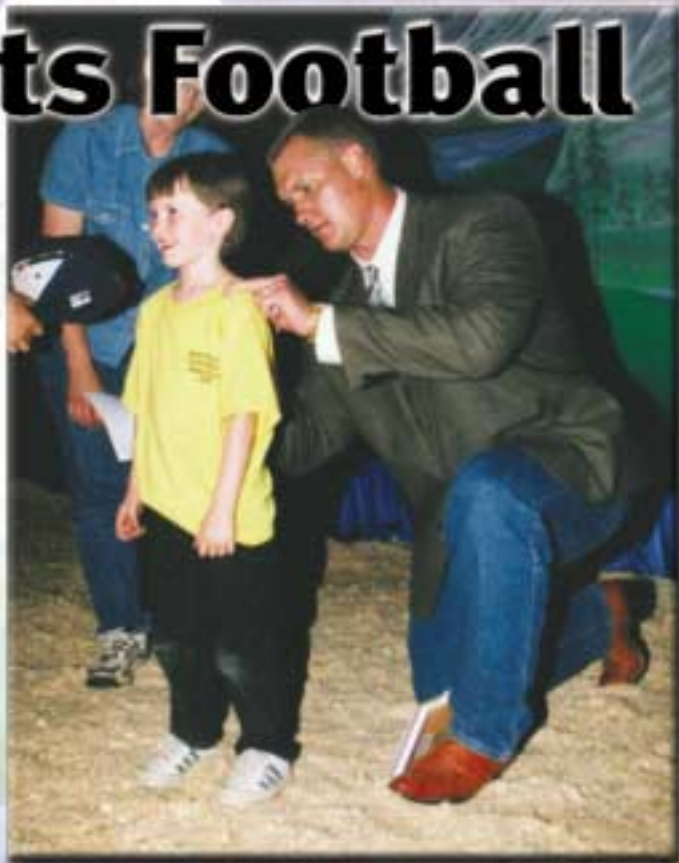
Neujahr gave them more than just advice; he gave them a father-son story.

For many young juniors who start showing cattle, their first heifers or steers are extra-special. Neujahr is no exception. He told the story of the two heifers that started his herd.

"Blue Eyes and Kicker started the foundation of the relationship for my father and me. A foundation that is still strong today," Neujahr said.

"For the parents here today, I would encourage you to spend more time with your children. Some of you are probably thinking

that I am talking to the person sitting next to you — that you spend enough time with your children now," Neujahr said. "Well, you are wrong. I am talking to each and every one of you."



► Neujahr takes a moment to sign a young fan's T-shirt after his speech during the opening ceremonies of the 2001 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Denver, Colo. Neujahr returned to the NJAS as a spectator, bringing his wife, Kathryn, and 15-month-old son, Dalton, to Saturday's events.

His message was simple. It was a message that most parents already know but don't account for each day, he says.

Neujahr is gaining experience as a parent. His own son, Dalton, is only 15 months old and is already growing up too fast, Neujahr says. He learned from his own father, who he says wishes he'd done differently was to spend more time with his children while they were younger.

For the children

Neujahr didn't want to walk away without also leaving a message with the youth.

"They say that to be successful, it's not so much what happens to you in your life as it is how you react to it," Neujahr told NJAS participants.

"You, as young adults, are going to be faced with many challenges in your life, and you might make a few mistakes along the way," he says. "If you are like me, then you will have several of

both. Learn from them and go on."

One thing that makes this National Football League (NFL) player different from many is his love and appreciation for his heritage and small-town rearing.

"Don't forget where you came from," Neujahr said. "No matter how much success you've had in life, it will always humble you. Keep that the center of your life, and you will be grateful."

Walking the walk

At 6 feet 4 inches and 295 pounds (lb.), Neujahr is a big role model. Rarely do you find an NFL player who would spend time at a cattle show. But Neujahr even brought his wife, Kathryn, and son back to the event. It's family time for him.

"The time you spend with your children now as parents will be the foundation for the relationship and memories you will have *with* them, not *of* them. Make it a strong foundation," Neujahr advises.



► Quentin Neujahr, backup center for the Denver Broncos, is no stranger to Angus cattle. He grew up showing and raising cattle near Surprise, Neb. Neujahr talked about his experiences with Angus cattle and gave advice to parents and juniors at the opening ceremonies.