

# 2021

# NATIONAL JUNIOR ANGUS SHOW

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*Jace Stagemeyer wins the 2021 NJAS Showmanship contest hosted in Grand Island, Neb.*

*by Sarah Harris, editorial intern*

Despite the building anticipation amongst competitors, the stoic face of the soon-to-be champion showman exuded confidence and tranquility as he stood alongside 14 of the best showmen and women at the 2021 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). The announcer began recognizing the top five honorees, and as the list dwindled to the last name, he clenched the end of his showstick, at peace with how far his Angus journey had brought him.

"I said to myself, 'You're either going big or going home,'" Jace Stagemeyer, Page, Neb., recounts in those moments before being named the winner of the NJAS Showmanship contest. "They announced my name and everything kind of just went away."

Stagemeyer grew up in a family steeped in Angus tradition. His grandfather, Bob Beelaert, Page, Neb., who was present for Stagemeyer's ultimate victory, raised



purebred Angus cattle and was one of the first people to start their state's junior Angus association, serving as president its inaugural year.

"I bought my first Angus heifer in 1950. She was the champion heifer of our county's sale," Beelaert says. "That's when it all started."

With his grandparents' legacy in the Angus breed and his parents' involvement in showing cattle — a passion passed on to Jace and his brothers — the Stagemeyers continue to contribute to their family's Angus history.

"We've always had Angus running through our blood," Stagemeyer says. "The Angus breed has always held a special place in our family's heart, and we've had a fair bit of tradition with our family there."

Growing up, Stagemeyer listened to the stories his grandfather shared about his own experiences in the show ring.

"The Angus showmanship contest was before his time, but he told me about a time he came really close to making the cut in an intense showmanship contest," Stagemeyer says. "I believe he got an honorable mention, but he'd always tell stories about it and tell me how he'd never forget that moment. It was pretty neat to hear that, and he was right — I'll never forget that moment."

Stagemeyer says winning showmanship this year was special for so many reasons but especially because he was able to make his grandfather proud. He's ecstatic his grandfather could be there to witness his successful campaign.

"It was the young man who won showmanship, it wasn't the heifer that won," Beelaert says. "It was a



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very humbling, proud moment Jace has worked all his years for.”

Stagemeyer went into the competition level-headed and ready to compete, a practice his showing career has prepped him for since the first time he grasped the lead.

“I knew I had the ability to succeed; I’ve done this my whole life, and there wasn’t a reason to not do so unless the heifer didn’t cooperate,” Stagemeyer says. “I trusted my ability to do it, and I went out there and did my thing.”

During the initial cut in selecting the top 15 showmen and women, he remembers clenching the end of his showstick in anticipation as Zach McCall and Alex Cozzitorto, two of his close friends, were recognized to advance to the final round. He was excited for their success and yearned to show against them in the finals.

“My number was 105, and I was always listening for that number,” Stagemeyer says. “When it finally came out, it was like a big sigh of relief. Making the final cut is a big achievement in itself — those top 15

kids are all really good.”

The final heat of showmanship took place Saturday, July 17, and lasted for 45 minutes. Jace says his nerves didn’t set in until the competitors got to choose their heifers. He told himself he had to work with what he got dealt as he took the lead, and then he entered into the last dance of the showmanship competition.

“One of the coolest honors was getting to work with and compete against some of my best friends,” Stagemeyer says. “We set our friendships aside when we step into the ring, but when it’s all said and done, we’re all still good friends when it’s finished.”

When the top 15 were ushered into the ring after the conclusion of the final heat, Stagemeyer didn’t know what to expect. He hoped to at least hear his name called as a top five finalist, and as the show officials began announcing the winners, the wise words of the late Cory Watt went through his head: “Do your best and let God do the rest.”

With those famed words repeatedly going through his mind, Stagemeyer’s name was called out as the winner of the 2021 NJAS Showmanship competition.

“It was a really humbling experience, and I feel really blessed to have even had the opportunity to experience it,” he says. “This is probably the premiere showmanship competition in the nation, and to be able to make it to that top spot was a once in a lifetime opportunity — that makes it even more special.”

He is the first male to win the competition in 15 years, and it has been 21 years since someone from Nebraska won the title.

Stagemeyer echoes his utmost respect and appreciation to his parents, Carla and Brent; grandparents, Bob and Joyce Beelaert; brothers, Miles and Tucker; breeders; and supporters for all they have done and continue to do to help him succeed. He says it’s fun to see all of the hard work paying off, and it makes his family want to keep working harder towards their goals.



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“This showmanship deal means a lot to not only me, but my family too,” he says. “We feel really blessed from God with all the success we’ve had as a family. All the glory goes to Him, and we’re so grateful for all the opportunities and people we’ve been able to meet.”

Beelaert says the family’s operation is called Stagemeyer Brothers for a reason — if one of the three brothers wins, they all three feel just as good about the success.

Stagemeyer currently works on his family’s operation, helping to manage its diversified profit centers, including a cow-calf operation, row crop farming and custom backgrounding for feedyard clients.

In May Stagemeyer graduated from Butler Community College (BCC) in El Dorado, Kan., with an associate degree in agricultural science. While

at BCC, Stagemeyer was a part of a nationally acclaimed junior collegiate livestock judging program.

Stagemeyer plans to continue his collegiate livestock judging career at South Dakota State University (SDSU) in Brookings, S.D., this fall. He plans to major in agricultural systems technology with an emphasis in precision agriculture and a minor in agribusiness.

Following his education Stagemeyer intends to return to the family operation to continue the ranching and farming traditions established by those who came before him. He plans to obtain a pilot’s license to utilize in aerial crop dusting and checking cattle.

“So far it’s all turned out well with God’s plan; it’s truly been a blessing,” Stagemeyer says. “There’s a lot of great industry leaders in the Angus

breed and having the opportunity to meet and interact with those breeders has been a key part, not only in my success throughout my life, but building those friendships along the way. I’ll always cherish these connections, friendships and memories.”

### Top five

Following Stagemeyer in the top five were Natalie Phillips, Masontown, W.Va., second place; Chancee Clark, Muldrow, Okla., third place; Hannah Tremaine, Oconomowoc, Wis., fourth place; and Eva Hinrichsen, Westmoreland, Kan., fifth place. **AJ**



The top 15 showmen in the 2021 National Junior Angus Showmanship Contest (from left) are Chance Greene, Powell Butte, Ore., honorable mention; and finalists, Maguire Rohr, Elbert, Colo.; Ashlyn Mool, Lexington, Ill.; Kaitlin Bell, Nottingham, Penn.; Natalie Phillips, Masontown, W.Va.; Hannah Tremaine, Oconomowoc, Wis.; Claire Brown, Lafayette, Ind.; Eva Hinrichsen, Westmoreland, Kan.; Chancee Clark, Muldrow, Okla.; Brooklyn Curtin, Oxford, Iowa; Skye Wimmer, Portland, Ind.; Alexandria Cozzitorto, Olathe, Kan.; Erica Chapman, Tipton, Iowa; Whitney Walker, Prairie Grove, Ark.; Jace Stagemeyer, Page, Neb.; Zach McCall, Greenville, Va.; and Mary Stratton, Crystal Springs, Miss., honorable mention.