

by Julie Mais
Editor



Iron sharpens iron

It's the spirit of competition that brought hundreds of Angus families to Kansas City, Mo., in July. "The Biggest Show on Dirt," also termed the "hottest" show for the week's high temps, heated up even more when the contests and the shows got underway.

The National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) epitomizes the competitive nature of young Angus breeders. At first glance, this is what it's all about — winning banners, placing in contests, getting your picture taken at the backdrop — and it's exciting.

The benefit of this competitive spirit, however, runs deeper than the ribbons and awards taken home.

Proverbs 27:17 reads, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

From observing events like the NJAS, and participating in them years ago, I've come to believe the true spirit of competition has never really been about winning against that other person. Instead, it's about iron sharpening iron. It's about mentoring, learning from and encouraging others. It's about lifting each other up and holding each other to a higher standard of integrity and through that, becoming a better version of ourselves.

This issue's theme is "Level Up," but to do so, you have to surround yourself with the right people, well beyond the years you spend in the show ring as an Angus junior.

Parker Henley, the NJAS owned heifer assistant judge, described the influence people like Chad Holtkamp, the owned heifer judge who he evaluated cattle alongside, have had on his life.

"He took an interest in me at a show. From that point forward, he has been a person who consistently checks in on me," Henley said during the grand drive. "He's been a cheerleader and supporter of me through my career. I challenge you to find good mentors. Find those people, and ask those questions." To the those around the ring he said, "Don't afraid to take an interest in a young person."

Holtkamp described cattle shows as a vehicle to teach kids.


"10 to 20 years from now, we

may not remember these cattle out here, but we'll remember the relationships," he said. "... Integrity is how you treat people in terms of honesty, how you do what you'll say you'll do. That's where it's at in how you treat people. It doesn't cost you anything to be kind to anybody."

Showmanship judge Dylan Evans spoke about a recent tragedy affecting his family and how the people in his life showed up to support him. He shared a quote from Mr. Rogers: "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"

Evans said he relied on "the helpers" when he was a kid showing Angus cattle, and he still relies on them every day.

"There are so many people you have to surround yourself with, because they are going to help," he said. "We have to work together, we have to help each other. And find the good in one another."

I can attest, the spirit of competition provides the opportunity for building character and relationships that will last beyond the show ring and contest rooms. 

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie".

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Keeping the conversation going

There's always more to the story. We know that deep topics require dynamic conversations — that means thoughtful questions, multiple viewpoints and healthy discussions. The *Angus Journal* has always centered around that, but our new podcast, *The Angus Conversation*, offers a unique format to cover some of the challenges, opportunities and progress in the breed.

You'll hear from fellow cattlemen and women, outside voices and Association staff. During this fall's inaugural season, we've planned segments that will range from breeding objectives and consumer preference to emerging technologies and a look back at our Angus heritage. You can find it anywhere you listen to podcasts, or send our team an email (theangusconversation@angus.org) and we'll get you connected.