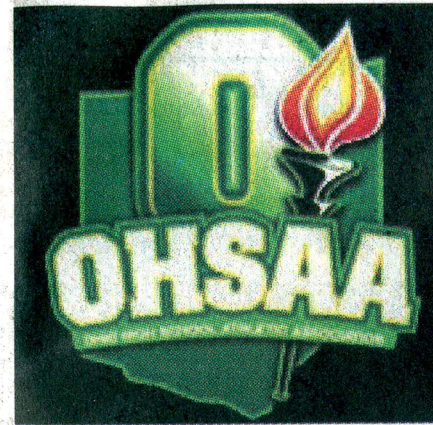


Taylor Earnhardt-Putnam races with 'one horse power;' See Page 10

THE HIGHLAND COUNTY PRESS SPORTS

Who's News...



Eastern Brown boys basketball coach Rob Beucler was among the high school coaches recognized with OHSAA Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity Awards. For more, see Page 10 or visit highlandcountypress.com.

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TAYLOR EARNHARDT-PUTNAM RACES WITH 'ONE HORSE POWER'

DAUGHTER OF 7-TIME NASCAR CHAMPION DALE EARNHARDT RACES AT THE RODEO AROUND THE COUNTRY

By **STEPHEN FORSHA**
The Highland County Press

Being the daughter of a racing icon has not only prepared Taylor Earnhardt-Putnam for life in the spotlight, but the 26-year-old is prepared to use the competitiveness inherited from her father on the track as well.

The youngest daughter of seven-time NASCAR Cup champion, Dale Earnhardt, Earnhardt-Putnam says she doesn't race with 800-horsepower on an asphalt track like her father once did. No, the youngest child of "The Intimidator" says in her biography that she races "on one horse power," as a professional horse barrel racer with the Southern Rodeo Association (SRA) and the International Professional Rodeo Association.

Earnhardt-Putnam was in Chillicothe this weekend for a IRA race at the Ross County Fairgrounds. The rodeo is also a family affair for Earnhardt-Putnam, with the stop being part of a summer racing tour she and her husband, Brandon, and sister-in-law will compete in.

"This is the start of my IRA season," Earnhardt-Putnam told *The Highland County*



goal was to make it to the finals. Right away, I clicked with him, and we eventually made it to the finals, which was the goal. We didn't win, but it was rewarding to set a goal at the start of the season and to achieve it by the end of the year."

In a lot of athletic fields, there is nothing but bad news, but Earnhardt-Putnam is different as the Morrisville, N.C. native gives back to the sport by helping others when they need advice, while also being a spokesperson for the Dale Earnhardt Foundation, which was founded in 2002.

The Dale Earnhardt Foundation's mission statement is: "The Dale Earnhardt Foundation's mission is to continue Dale's legacy through charitable programs and grants that sustain his lifelong commitment to children, education and environmental/wildlife preservation."

"It has been tougher being there in person to promote the foundation, but when I am home I love to talk about the foundation, because it speaks of the values my dad believed in," Earnhardt-Putnam said.

"I like talking about his values and continuing what he did"

"This is the start of my IRA season," Earnhardt-Putnam told *The Highland County Press* before her race in Ross County. "On Thursday night I raced in Richmond, Indiana, where I was third."

Before she was known for her skills on the rodeo track on the barrel racing circuit, Earnhardt-Putnam began her love of horses and animals while learning from her father.

"I've rode horses all my life," Earnhardt-Putnam said. "After Dad passed away, I got into racing horses because my friend raced them and I watched her. I then tried it and developed a love for it."

Being on the road every weekend is a way of life for Earnhardt-Putnam, as she grew up traveling from race track to race track as her father won on the then-Winston Cup

Taylor Earnhardt-Putnam, pictured, is currently racing with the SRA and International Professional Rodeo Association.

circuit. When asked if the travel, schedule and lifestyle growing up helped her in her chosen profession today, Earnhardt-Putnam didn't hesitate with an answer.

"Growing up at race tracks and traveling was never out of the ordinary for me," she said. "It was a way of life for us. If there was one thing I learned from Dad and growing up on the road and at the race track that I use today, it is to stay positive."

"There will be plenty of days where I won't be the best, but I have to push through to achieve success. Being on the road growing up has definitely prepared me for this."

Before the weekend races, in the SRA barrel racing standings, Earnhardt-Putnam was fifth overall with 2,394.60 points (as of June 22).

In preparation for racing with the SRA and IRA, Earnhardt-Putnam won several competitions while climbing the ladder, including the 2008 All-Around championship (Josey Ranch) and the North Carolina National Barrel Horse Association championship. She also earned the title of Junior Southern Rodeo Champion in 2003.

When it comes to her competitiveness, well, the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree with her late father being one

of the most competitive and greatest race car drivers, as she describes herself as a "very competitive person."

"Absolutely," Earnhardt-Putnam responded when asked if she inherited any of her father's competitiveness. "I'm very competitive, and I like to win. Not only did I inherit the competitiveness from him, but he also enjoyed helping others around him, and I'm the same way."

If someone has never seen a barrel race before, check one out, because it is not your usual horse race. There are a lot of precise details in a barrel race, which usually lasts no longer than 16 seconds.

"Every track is different, so you have to walk the grounds before you race," Earnhardt-Putnam said. "You have to know the pattern and try to play out every possibility that can happen in a race beforehand. You can't afford to think about it while in the race, because it is so intense."

"The races are so intense for the short amount of time, but I love it."

Earnhardt-Putnam had two horses she'll race, but the one she brings on the road is named Mr. C, named by his previous owners for a scar on his head in the shape of a C.

"Last year, I got him in the middle of the season, and my

"I like talking about his values and continuing what he did."

Earnhardt-Putnam spoke of one instance during her recent race in Richmond, Ind. in helping others, plus why owning or taking care of a horse is important.

"I love helping out those who are just beginning," she said. "Just this week, I met a girl competing in her first rodeo, and she was very nervous. I just told her to take her time, be calm, don't worry and do what you do best."

"Seeing kids race for the first time ... they are enthusiastic when they are around the horses. That's what I like to see. If more people did this and owned horses, the world would be a better place, because it teaches us how to take better care of each other."

Photo courtesy of Chris Oth Studios