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N THE LAST ISSUE, I STARTED A 2-year-old filly, taking her from her first handling all the way to her first saddling. The filly is Oats And Cream, by Mr Sun O Lena out of Black Cream by Peponita. She belongs to Roy Gene Evans of Dallas, but she was bred and raised by the Four Sixes Ranch. We began by exposing her to a small flag on the end of a 4-foot stick, and proceeded all the way through getting her used to carrying the saddle. In this issue, I'll tell you about our first ride.

When I caught the filly for this lesson, my first step was a refresher course of what we had learned last time. I used the flag a little all over her body, made sure she was still comfortable with it, and then I saddled her.

From this point on, we were traveling new ground. After she was saddled and standing comfortably, the first thing I did was walk around her and move the stirrups on both sides, letting her feel them move on her sides. I wanted to make sure she was comfortable with that and I wanted to make sure that I still had control of her hind quarters, as we talked about in the last issue. I rubbed the stirrup leathers against her, and I also pushed and pulled on the saddle horn. I wanted her to learn to brace her feet for support as I stepped on.

Once she was bracing well, I stepped halfway up into the stirrup, and then stepped down. I did that a few times on both sides. As we mentioned in the last issue, you want the horse the same on both sides.

Once she was comfortable and relaxed with me halfway up, I stood in the stirrup and reached over and grabbed the other stirrup. I moved it around by her flank and in front of the cinch because all of that prepared her for my leg swinging over. Once she was confident with that maneuver, my hand led the way for my leg. In other words, my hand touched her on

Starting Colts

By Joe Wolter

the hip and down the side to the stirrup, and then my leg and foot headed to the stirrup.

And again, I want to emphasize that I did this from both sides.

When I was going through this, I had a short lead rope with my hand pretty far up on her neck so that I had control, but I didn't have her head pulled around. I have had better success if I let colts put their head where they think it needs to be for balance. I had the lead rope short, but it wasn't inhibiting her from keeping her head straight.

After I had sat on her back for a few moments, I

Lesson two:

I ride Oats

And Cream for

the first time



With the lead rope short for control, Joe steps halfway up into the stirrup.

stepped down and then did it again. Once she was comfortable with me sitting there, I brought her head around and started trying to get her to walk off. Soon we progressed to a trot, and then to a lope, but we'll talk more about that in the next issue.



Joe Wolter is a trainer at the Four Sixes Ranch at Guthrie, Texas, where he starts a number of colts each year. In each of his columns this year, Joe will progress through Oats And Cream's training.