Black Scootin' Bootie (Scoot) is an 8-year-old black quarter horse mare that came to the OSU Center for Veterinary Health Sciences in June 2006. She was suffering from an infection in her eye and was referred by the family veterinarian, Dr. Brett Jones, to the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital for treatment. Dr. Lyndi Gilliam was assigned the case.

Scoot belongs to Tom and Rhonda White. Their daughter, Lyndsey, had been competing on Scoot in barrel racing and pole bending at high school rodeos. However, an infection developed in the anterior chamber and cornea of her eye.

“We had made it to the Texas High School Rodeo Finals state competition for the first time,” recalls Lyndsey. “Scoot was getting slower and then her eye turned blue. After the first go around we had to draw out of competition because Scoot could not see out of her right eye.”

Usually with aggressive therapy these types of infections can be cured; however, the infection that plagued Scoot was unusual and very severe.

“We used an extremely intense therapy,” recalls Dr. Gilliam. “Unfortunately, we were unable to save her eye and were forced to enucleate it. I encouraged Lyndsey and her family not to give up on Scoot—and they didn’t.”

Lyndsey took Scoot to Tri-State High School rodeos and Texas High School Region 1 rodeos. She competed in five of eight possible rodeos on the fall 2006 circuit. The Lyndsey-Scoot team placed in all five rodeos in pole bending and in two of the five in barrel racing. Each time out, Scoot’s times continued to improve in both events.

“Scoot has really taken to pole bending,” says Tom. “Out of 42 girls, Lyndsey is in 6th place half-way through the season in pole bending for both Tri-State and Texas High School rodeos. Before we started bringing Scoot, she wasn’t even in the top 15. In barrel racing, Lyndsey is tied for 14th/15th place in Tri-State and 16th place in Texas.”

According to Dr. Gilliam, it is truly amazing that a one-eyed horse is able to achieve these results, especially in the pole bending event. Scoot is literally weaving blind when she goes to the right.

“I think Scoot is a wonderful teaching lesson about disabilities and how if people believe in you, even with a profound disability, you can succeed,” says Dr. Gilliam. “Her story is about accepting a disability as a challenge and making the absolute best of it.”

“People are amazed she is able to compete at this high level of competition,” smiles Tom. “We’re looking forward to the spring schedule, not only to compete but to be a contender for year champion. This was the first time we used the facilities and resources available at OSU’s Center for Veterinary Health Sciences. It was great. Dr. Gilliam and her staff greeted us at the door and kept us informed every step of the way. My family—and Scoot, too—thank Dr. Lyndi Gilliam and her caring staff at the Veterinary Hospital for making this possible.”

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According to her parents, Tom and Rhonda White, this dynamic duo finished the regular season in Texas High School Rodeo Region I in 6th place overall in Pole Bending. This one-eyed horse is off to Abilene, Texas, where Lyndsey will ride her in the Texas State High School Rodeo Finals June 10-16. Also they will be competing at Vernon, Texas, in the Tri-State High School Rodeo Finals June 1-3. They finished the regular season in 6th place overall in pole bending as well.

Congratulations and good luck to Lyndsey and Scoot!