

He Grew Up to Be an Inner-City Cowboy

By RONALD B. TAYLOR, Times Staff Writer

This is the final series of articles on Charles Sampson, the innercity cowboy. HE broke the barrier to become one of the nation's premiere cowboys. "Chuckie" Sampson found his mark and now is moving into "big time." Meet Charles Sampson, a bull-riding champion.

In Houston, on the Sunday afternoon before the finals, Sampson went out to one of these black rodeos as a spectator. The contrast between the Astrodome and the rodeo in a tiny run-down arena out behind a

junk yard, was sharp. Black cowboys crowded around Sampson. he was their champion. One of them, Maloy Scott, when asked why more blacks were not in big-time rodeo, said, "You have to be a

hell of a cowboy to do that."

Sampson is just that, according to Gary Leflew, a white cowboy who won the bull riding world title in 1970 and now runs a bull-riding school near Arroyo Grande, Calif.

"Charley's Leflew said. "He's good, but twice now he's been high up in the point standings and then got hurt."

BROKEN BONES

Bulls have broken Sampson's right leg

twice above the knee, and once a bull stepped on his chest, splitting his sternum and pushing a rib into a lung.

Despite his injuries Sampson has stayed with spending his time, money, and energy on one goal a big gold and silver belt buckle that proclaims him the world champion bull rider.

Sampson is a quiet, self-confident young man who is an accepted member of that exclusive band of cowboys who do nothing but ride

It all began for Sampson on that 25-cent pony ride on 132nd Street.

QUARTER PONY RIDES

He took one ride and was hooked.

"I gave the man my quarter and I was out there all by myself. That five laps went by so fast, I gave him my last quarter, and took another turn, and I was broke."

Gathering cans and bottles, and doing odd jobs around the house, the 10 year old Sampson scratched together a



Charles Sampson

bulls, competing in 100 to 150 rodeos a year.

Often he is riding in several rodeos a week. After qualifying his first bull in Houston, he won \$940 on two bulls in Scottsdale, Ariz., flew to Monroe, La. and won \$1,364 more and went on to Mobile, Ala. before returning to Houston for his second bull there.

Sampson sees no disadvantage in being black. "Me, I don't understand the disadvantage. I'm Charles Sampson, and this (rodeo) is what I want to do."

Sampson has a hard time explaining why he wants to ride bulls."

dollar and went back to the pony ride. But riding around the house, the 10 year old Sampson scratched together a dollar and went back to the pony ride. But riding around the ring soon lost its appeal.

At home in Los Angeles, the Sampson family was exuberant. Jackie Sampson, a sister, summed it up. "We're so proud of him. All the girls at work want me to save pictures of him."

And Mildred Sampson, who saw her son grow up to be a cowboy, admitted she was afraid for his safety,

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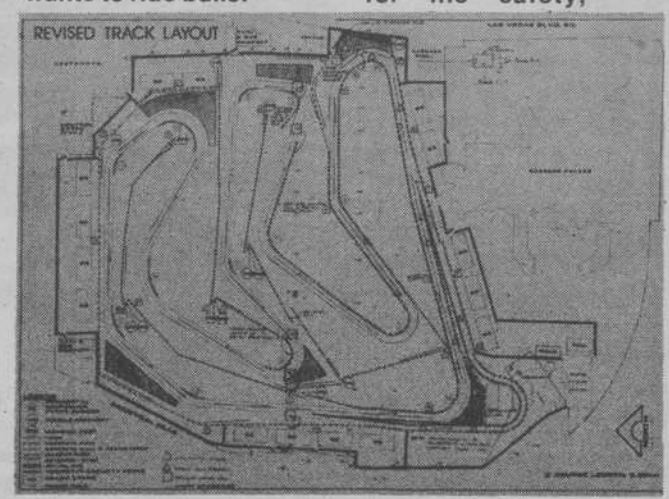
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LAS VEGAS, NV — Construction on the 2.2 mile road course being readied for the October 17 Caesars Palace Grand Prix has taken a new turn — or rather, fewer turns. The original track design called for the Grand Prix drivers to be challenged by a twisting course with 16 turns. However, track officials recently re-evaluated the circuit and decided to alter the maze which will sit on the portion of land just north of Caesars Palace.