

I'm Clay Murray, and I'm based out of Prairie Lane Farm in Collinsville, Oklahoma.

My family was not horse savvy at all, they're city people, they didn't know anything about horses ...

but I wouldn't stop talking about horses, so they stuck me in lessons at 5, and there was no going back.

Once I was around horses, I really enjoyed learning that communication where ...

I want to do something, and the horse does it.

And that's a really cool thing that other sports don't have.

Most other sports, it's just you, or a piece of equipment, you know. Like in tennis, it's a racket.

But horses aren't equipment, they're a living soul.

And so to communicate and be able to work together with another creature to do something is really cool.

Growing up, there definitely was a difference between how I was perceived by other people ...

and how I was perceived by horses.

Horses, I always felt like I never had to put on a show or be anything but what I was.

I was at this really small little barn, and there was a horse there, and she was notorious.

She did not like women, she liked men.

This horse loved me, though, she always did. She'd come up to see me, she'd follow me around, and at the time, this was right before my transition was really known.

I was joking with her one day, I was petting on her, and I was like ...

"You like me, huh. But you only like guys." So I said,

"Well, It's because I'm a guy".

And it was one of the first times that I had really actually said that.

Horses have taught me that I can be a little uptight, and I definitely have had problems with being too "in control."

And with a horse, you can't do that, because you have to give them that trust ...

that they're going to do what you need them to do. And you can't control every aspect.

So for me, it's been really good in my life to have that reminder that you can't control everything, and you just need to relax and trust the horse.

The relationship I have with Savvy is really, it's really special, because she just sees me for me, and she's a very loving horse.

She just wants to be with you, and that's really special, and you can't just manufacture that.

I feel like eventing constantly has an extra aspect to it, and for me,

that helps me focus, when there's so many things going on.

And then, It usually has an adrenaline factor, with, like, cross-country and the jumping,

so that makes you even more focused.

I really do like the dressage aspect of eventing because of that detail work ...

where you have to have solid communication on what you're trying to accomplish.

So I did a photo shoot with my horse, and I had my friend put rainbow makeup on my face.

She thought it'd be cool if it looked like tears.

And then I'm wearing a shirt that has a rainbow on it that says, "Love Is Love."

And I just wanted people to feel accepted and feel that we have each other's back as a community.

Of course, I had to put the rainbow fly bonnet on Savvy so that she could be a representation, as well.

It was an opportunity that someone needed to take to be an example for the transgender community.

Because if there's any kind of backlash, the positives far outweigh that.

So far, the equestrian community has been really good to me. My barn family here has been fantastic.

They are always very respectful of my name and my pronouns, because it is my name and my pronouns.

A lot of people online have been incredibly supportive, and more people messaging me, thanking me, saying that they love seeing representation, because it makes them feel more comfortable in the sport.

So far I've had very positive interactions and nothing negative.

Horses have absolutely given me all of the confidence to stand up and say, "This is who I am."

And I want other people to feel the same way, that they can come up and say ...

"Well, this is who I am, and I'm safe in this community, and I'm wanted in this community."

I'm Clay Murray, and I am US Equestrian.