# 2017 Canadian Champions

DUF

#CFR44

2018 CPRA Media Guide



### **KY MARSHALL**

### Bowden, Alberta

**Events:** Bareback Riding, Tie Down Roping

**Born:** Mar 26, 1992 **Year turned pro**: 2012

**CFR qualifications:** NBB (1) 2011 BB (5) 2013-2017

2017 standings: BB 8th TDR 43rd AA 1st

**2017 earnings:** BB \$32,682.00 TDR \$3,759.91 AA \$33,425.40

**2017 highlights:** Regina Agribition Champion

Career highlights: Canadian Novice Bareback Champion 2011, Canadian All

Around Champion 2014

Other occupation: Farmer, rancher

Special interests: Hunting

Height and weight: 5'10, 170 lbs

**Family:** Danielle (wife) Emerson, Deelia (daughters)

# MARSHALL EARNS SECOND AA TITLE

inning is, as they say, in Ky Marshall's DNA. The 25-year-old Bowden, Alberta cowboy won both the bareback and all-around Intercollegiate championships, then followed up with a CPRA Novice Bareback title in 2011 and his first Canadian All-Around buckle in 2014.

But Marshall made it clear that emerging as the All-Around champion again in 2017 was especially meaningful. "It's not easy to win this—getting those roping placings when there are just so many good guys is tough—so it makes this pretty special."

The seven-year pro was referring to the CPRA requirement that a competitor must place at a minimum of three times in both a riding event and a timed event to qualify for the All-Around race. That all-important third placing in the roping came in late July and that, coupled with getting to his fifth consecutive CFR in the bareback riding, was the formula that carried the likable central Alberta rancher to that second All-Around award.

The season began well for Marshall with a win at Regina's Agribition Rodeo. "That really set me up for the season and I just kept plucking away all summer after that," the father of two acknowledged. "I would have liked to win a little more at the CFR (Marshall managed a pair of fifth place cheques and a small cheque in the average) but I was just really happy to be here, and riding against these guys at this event is pretty amazing."

Marshall was quick to credit his dad and his whole family including wife Dani and daughters Emerson and Delia) along with his sponsors for providing the help and support

that have made it possible for him to enjoy the success he has to date.

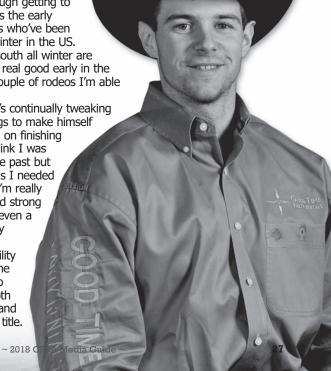
Despite his impressive list of accomplishments at every level of Canadian rodeo, the dedicated family man has no plans to compete in any meaningful way south of the 49th parallel. "With the family and the ranch, I'm really busy up here and pretty happy to compete the way I do now."

He did hint that one of his goals is to one day win a bareback title. The central Alberta talent acknowledges that it's tough getting to the pay window in the spring as the early rodeos often attract contestants who've been getting on bucking horses all winter in the US.

"The guys who ride down south all winter are in really good shape and riding real good early in the season but I find that after a couple of rodeos I'm able to kind of catch up."

Marshall also noted that he's continually tweaking his rides, trying to do little things to make himself better. "I'm really concentrating on finishing strong every time I get on. I think I was starting horses pretty well in the past but sometimes I wasn't as strong as I needed to be for the whole ride. Now I'm really working at being aggressive and strong right to the eight seconds and even a little beyond. I think that's really helped me."

With the natural athletic ability he possesses at both ends of the arena, rodeo fans can expect to watch Ky Marshall challenge both for that coveted bareback title and quite possibly a third All-Around title.





### **MORGAN GRANT**

Didsbury, Alberta

**Events:** Steer Wrestling, Tie Down Roping

**Born:** July 4, 1989 **Year turned pro:** 2007

CFR qualifications: TDR (6) 2010, 2013-2017 SW (4) 2013, 2015-2017

**2017 standings:** TDR 4th SW 8th

**2017 earnings:** TDR \$47,730.27 SW \$32,268.06

**2017 highlights:** Bruce, AB SW Champion; Medicine Hat, AB Spring Champion **Career highlights:** 2014 TDR Calgary Stampede Champion; 3 x Canadian High Point Champion (2013, 2016, 2017); 2016 Alberta Circuit High Point Champion;

2013 Wrangler Pro Tour SW Champion

Horses: Bumps (SW), bay gelding, 16 yrs old, Dutch (TDR), dun gelding, 17 yrs

old

Other occupation: Petroleum Engineer

Height and weight: 6', 215lbs

**Family:** Gillian (wife)

Relatives in Rodeo: Gillian (wife, rodeo promotor); Cathy (mom, LBR); Brittany

(sister, LBR)

# **Three Times A Charm for Grant**

t was Morgan Grant's third High Point championship—he won it in 2013 and added back to back titles in 2016 and 17—but the easy going two-event talent made it clear winning doesn't get old.

"I'm really proud of this," Grant beamed after clinching the title in the final round of the 2017 CFR. "I'm originally from Ontario and I just always wanted to be a rodeo cowboy so to come here and compete against these guys at the CFR and win this for the third time, it's a dream come true."

Morgan needed a big final day and though an equally proficient steer wrestler throughout the 2017 season, it was a go-round win in the tie-down roping that sealed the deal for the twenty-eight year-old timed event specialist.

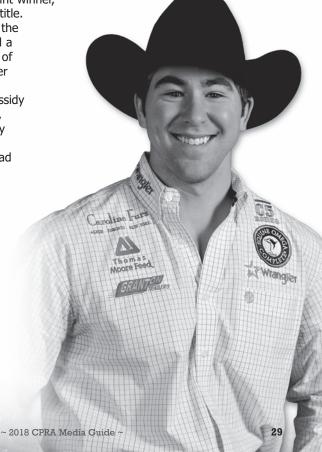
"In the tie-down roping, your horse is 60 percent of your success," Grant acknowledged. "I have a new horse this year and he really helped me step up my game. It came right down to that last calf and once again my horse was the difference maker."

The go-round win came courtesy of an 8.4 second run and was worth \$11,212. That and the \$2587 average cheque that went with it was enough to move Grant past the

hard-charging Riley Warren and nine-time high point winner, Curtis Cassidy for the title.

Grant wrapped up the year with \$79,998 and a slender \$7500 margin of victory over the Stettler tie-down roper/team roper, Warren with Cassidy another \$12,000 back, having qualified in only one event.

"I think overall I had a really good season," Grant reflected. "There was definitely some ups and downs but to finish it off like this, I was really happy with the year."





### **SETH HARDWICK**

### Ranchester, Wyoming

Event: Bareback Riding Born: Mar 8, 1989 Year turned pro: 2011 CFR qualifications: (1) 2017 NFR qualifications: (1) 2015

2017 standings: 1st

**2017 earnings:** \$74,980.40

2017 highlights: Medicine Hat, AB Spring; Hand Hills, AB Champion

Other occupation: Rancher

**Special interests:** Hunting, shooting, fitness, restoring old trucks

Height and weight: 5'7, 155 lbs

Family: Single

# **Consistency Pays Off For Hardwick**

t came down to one ride for the Canadian Bareback Riding title and the most consistent man at the 2017 CFR did exactly what he had been doing all week long...and won the title.

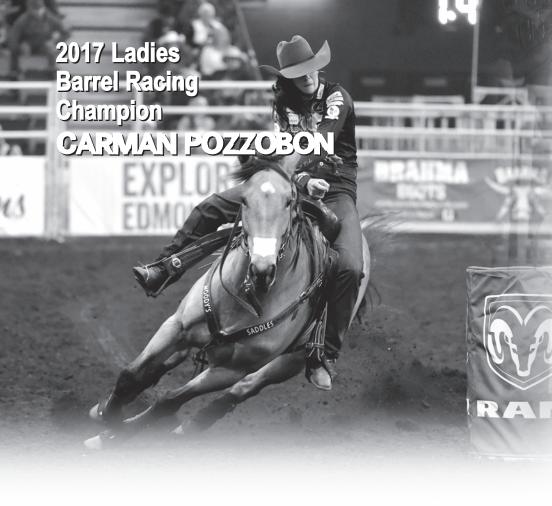
Seth Hardwick, the Ranchester, Wyoming cowboy, put together an 86.75 point ride of the Calgary Stampede's Yippee Kibitz, good for second place in the round and the average win. Hardwick's \$52,000 CFR haul brought the likable cowboy from off the pace coming into Edmonton to his first Canadian championship with a margin of less than \$1000 over second place finisher and three-time titleist, Jake Vold. The twenty-nine year-old Hardwick placed in every round, winning round three on Friday night and nailing down two second place finishes, two thirds and a 4/5 split.

"I've been up to Canada before for some of the big ones and kind of dabbled," the seven-year pro reflected. "But I'm traveling with (Canadian) Orin Larsen and he told me I should try to get to the CFR. Turned out to be a pretty good idea."

After missing all of 2016 with a hip injury, Hardwick's decision to spend more time on the north side of the 49th parallel coincided with a return to health. "I guess you could say I got back in my groove up here in Canada."

That groove was very much in evidence as the 2016 WNFR qualifier was cool under fire as the race tightened heading to the final weekend of the season. "I think I'm a pretty chill dude so I wasn't really bothered by pressure or anything," Hardwick noted. "It's fun when it comes down to the wire like that and because I was coming from behind it was maybe a little easier for me." Asked about the significance of the win, Hardwick was definite. "I've known guys who've won it before—JR (Vezain) and Jake three times so this means a lot to me," he grinned. "It's not easy and I really feel it was quite an accomplishment for me." Seth Hardwick was iust as definite about the upcoming 2018 season. "Absolutely I'll be back up here next year—and every vear for as long as I'm riding."

~ 2018 CPRA Media Quide ~



### **CARMAN POZZOBON**

**Alder Grove, British Columbia** 

Event: Barrel Racing Born: Jan 17, 1986 Year turned pro: 2015

CFR qualifications: (2) 2016-2017

**2017 standings:** 1st **2017 earnings:** \$68,399.38

2017 highlights: Coleman, AB; Coronation, AB; Armstrong, BC; Ponoka, AB

Champion

Career highlights: 2017 Ponoka Champion

Horse: Ripp, buckskin mare, 7 yrs old (2017 Ladies Barrel Racing Horse with the

Most Heart)

Other occupation: Barrel horse trainer

Height: 5'9

Relatives in rodeo: Cole (brother, TR); Ty (cousin, BR)

# **Pozzobon and Ripp Earn the Title**

t was the closest race of CFR 44. And when the dust settled for the last time on the Northland Coliseum arena floor, Aldergrove, BC's Carman Pozzobon emerged as the 2017 Canadian Barrel Racing Champion by just \$183 over Texas cowgirl, Jamie Hinton.

The BC barrel horse trainer placed in four rounds at the Canadian Finals Rodeo and added a second place average finish to account for her \$68,399.38. Heading into the all-important final round, her game plan was very simple. "I kept telling myself to just get around the barrels, no matter how ugly it looked. I knew we were set up pretty good in the average if I could just do that."

The strategy worked. Pozzobon finished 4th in that final round to maintain her place in the average and eke out the win.

And, as expected, Pozzobon was quick to hand much of the credit for her success to her seven year-old mare, Ripp'n Lady (Ripp), with her Frenchman's Guy, Dash Ta Fame bloodlines and a big heart. She acknowledged that she first began to believe that 2017 might just be a special year for the duo at Ponoka. She and Ripp split 6th in the long go, then won the short go and the average for a payday of \$8114 before adding the \$7500 Showdown win as well.

"She (Ripp) really loves that rodeo," Pozzobon admitted.

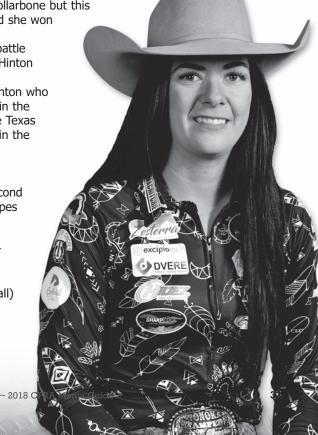
"Both of us feel that one and she did really well there. And I also didn't realize that she's as good as she is indoors as well. Last year I missed most of those with my broken collarbone but this year I bounced back and she won a couple of those too."

The neck and neck battle between Pozzobon and Hinton at the CFR wasn't new.

At Ponoka, it was Hinton who split 6/7 with Pozzobon in the opening round; then the Texas cowgirl finished second in the average and third in the Showdown round.

At 31 years-old, Pozzobon was at her second consecutive CFR and hopes to build on that success by heading south for at least some of the winter rodeos.

"I have to get my colts and horses (25 in all) set up and I'm building a place right now but I definitely do want to go down there and see what we can do."





### **LAYTON GREEN**

**Meeting Creek, Alberta** 

Event: Saddle Bronc Born: Jan 17, 1994 Year turned pro: 2013

CFR qualifications: NSB (2) 2011-2012 SB (3) 2015-2017

NFR qualifications: (1) 2017

2017 standings: 1st

**2017** earnings: \$107,363.75

2017 highlights: 2017 Season Leader, 91.5 points on Stampede Warrior at

Pollickville for the win. 2017 Alberta Circuit Winner

Career highlights: 2012 Canadian Novice Saddle Bronc Champion

Special interests: Hunting, fishing, ranching

Height and weight: 5'9, 150 lbs

Family: Single

Relatives in rodeo: Garrett (brother, BR); Kasper Roy (cousin, TR)

# **Record Year For Layton Green**

or Layton Green to win a Canadian championship, there was more than the challenge of beating 11 other finalists. One of those finalists was long time friend and reigning World Champion Zeke Thurston, and Green knew that any thought he had of winning the title involved staying ahead of his Alberta colleague.

The Big Valley super star closed the margin on the season leader through the first three rounds of the CFR and had reduced the deficit by half. "The week started off a little rough for me," Green acknowledged. "I drew a couple of horses that weren't all that desirable. I told myself to shake it off and for-

get about it."

The Meeting Creek, Alberta cowboy began to regain ground by virtue of a second place 86 point ride in performance three on Outlaw Buckers' three time Canadian Saddle Bronc of the year, Lunatic Party and placings in both of Saturday's rounds. This set him up for Sunday's finale and a re-match with Calgary Stampede's Weekend Departure.

"I drew that horse here last year," and she bucked me off. "But I was happy to have her. She's dang sure a good horse. She bucks and she'll test you."

Green put together an 86 point ride on the 8 year old bay mare for second in the round and \$8337. That result, coupled with his second place finish in the average (behind Thurston) clinched the title for the 23 year old talent who is

Las Vegas in early December where he'll be joined by his buddy and rival, Thurston.

"It seemed like everywhere Zeke and I rode together, we were one and two," Green recalled. "Even the K-Days Rodeo here, he wound up winning it and I was

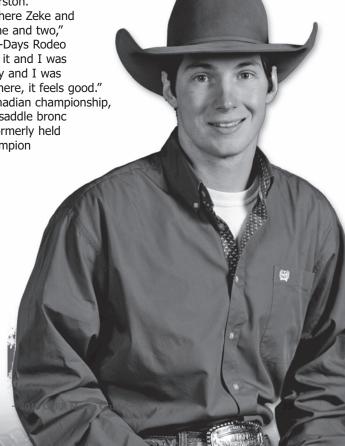
headed to his first Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in

second; and he won Calgary and I was second again. To beat him here, it feels good."

In claiming his first Canadian championship, Green eclipsed the all time saddle bronc season earning's record - formerly held by eight time Canadian champion Rod Hay. Green's \$107,363 bettered Hay's 2005 mark by \$5717.

And the second generation cowboy was not unaware of the significance of CFR44 in it's final year at it's long time home in Edmonton's Coliseum.

"To be here and win the last one ever at Northlands, I'll cherish these memories for a long time. It's pretty special."





# **JASON THOMAS**

### **Benton, Arkansas**

**Event:** Steer Wrestling **Born:** May 29, 1990 **Year turned pro:** 2013

**CFR qualifications:** (1) 2017 **NFR qualifications:** (1) 2016

**2017 standings:** 1st **2017 earnings:** \$59,177.23

**2017 highlights:** Ponoka, AB Champion

Career highlights: San Antonio 2016 Champion, 2013 PRCA Rookie of the Year,

Collage Finals Champion 2011

**Horse:** Frosty, grey gelding, 19 yrs old **Height and weight:** 6'2, 240 lbs

Family: Single

Relatives in rodeo: Jim (dad, SW, TDR, TR) Leanne (mom, LBR, break away

roper)

# **First Canadian Title for Thomas**

ason Thomas is Happy... Honest! Okay, let's be clear. Jason Thomas was really excited about winning his first Canadian steer wrestling championship.

"People look at me and think I'm pi\*\*\*d off all the time," the big Arkansasraised, Texas resident laughed moments after clinching the title. "But I'm really happy to win this. It means a lot to me."

The burly, bearded fifth-year pro placed in every round, won the average and amassed over \$42,500 in CFR earnings that included winning the aggregate in 23.4 seconds for his six runs (a record) to give him a season total of \$59,177 and a five thousand dollar margin over second place finisher, Scott Guenthner, of Provost.

"There are so many really good steer wrestlers up here like the Milans and the Cassidys and it feels good just to be in the same category with those guys," Thomas admitted.

"To be honest, it's harder for a guy like me to make the CFR than it is the WNFR," he confided. "We go so hard down there to get to Las Vegas that I just can't get up here that much. I just made my fifteen rodeo minimum count and that was it."

It was enough, however, to qualify the 27 year-old in 11th place, setting the stage for his scorching performance at CFR '44 and his eventual rise to Canadian steer wrestling supremacy. But even with the hot hand,

he needed to finish strong and did just that, bulldogging his final steer in 4.2 seconds to catch fourth place in Sunday afternoon's final round and give him the aggregate win that he needed to capture the crown.

With Soldier his 14 year old golding

With Soldier, his 14 year-old gelding having made the 30 hour trip to Edmonton with him and his family on hand to cheer him on, Thomas made a whole lot of friends and a whole lot of money at the final CFR in the venerable Northlands Coliseum.

(Next year's CFR moves to Red Deer's Enmax Centrium at Westerner Park).

But unfortunately, the big guy's hopes of a repeat performance took a hit early in the 2018 season. The 2016 WNFR qualifier suffered a broken right arm in the practice pen in Stephenville in February and was out of action for several weeks after surgery to repair the break.





### **GARRETT SMITH**

### Rexburg, Idaho

Event: Bull Riding Born: Jan 20, 1995 Year turned pro: 2014 CFR qualification: (1) 2017 NFR qualifications: (2) 2016-2017

**2017 standings:** 1st **2017 earnings:** \$70,184.98

2017 highlights: Ponoka, AB; Strathmore, AB; Medicine Hat, AB; Pincher Creek,

AB Champion

Career highlights: Won round 10 at 2016 NFR, Won round 2 at 2017 NFR,

**Special interests:** Steer wrestling **Height and weight:** 5'9, 145 lbs

Family: Single

**Relatives in rodeo:** Wyatt (brother, SW) Payson (brother, roper)

# **Big Year For Garrett Smith**

arrett Smith made no secret of the fact that the Canadian Finals Rodeo was a goal of his from the start of the 2017 rodeo season.

"My older brother Wyatt came up here a few years ago in the steer wrestling and I couldn't let him one up me," the Rexburg, Idaho bull rider grinned after laying claim to his first Canadian title.

The 22 year-old rode four of his six bulls at the CFR to protect the comfortable lead he had coming to the finals. When Tanner Girletz and 2016 champion Jordan Hansen bucked off their bulls in the final round, it was clear that Smith would emerge victorious.

"This is the highlight of my year, it's really incredible," acknowledged the newly crowned champion. "And getting to ride with Tanner in his last year was really special. He's a guy all bull riders look up to."

Girletz, the 2006 Canadian champion announced his intention to retire after this CFR and kept the pressure of Smith right up to the last ride before finishing second overall with \$62,172 in season earnings, just \$8,000 back of Smith's first place total.

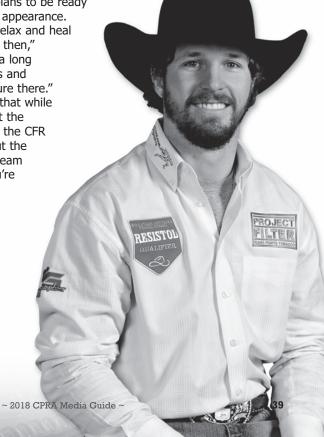
Smith, the champion's buckle and bronze firmly in hand, now heads off to Las Vegas where he goes into the

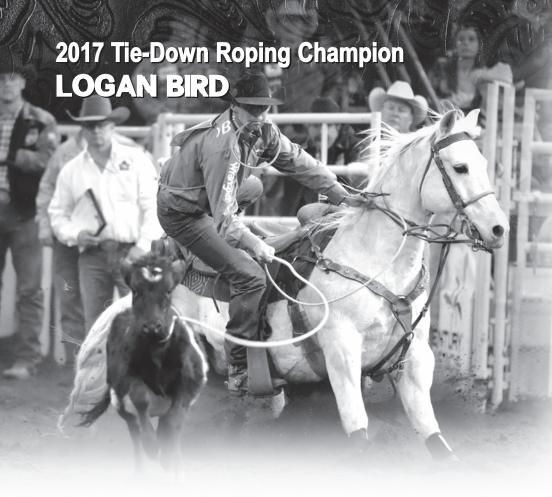
Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in second place behind Sage Kimsey, the three-time world titleist. Smith plans to be ready for his second WNFR appearance.

"I'm planning to relax and heal up between now and then," he commented. "It's a long ten days in Las Vegas and there's a lot of pressure there."

Smith also noted that while there was pressure at the Northlands Coliseum, the CFR is "a lot more fun. But the WNFR is what you dream about from when you're a kid so I really want to be ready.

"I'm just really happy that I was able to make both Finals."





### **LOGAN BIRD**

### Nanton, Alberta

**Event:** Tie down roping **Born:** May 15, 1994 **Year turned pro:** 2013

**CFR qualifications:** (2) 2013, 2016-17

**2017 standings:** 1st **2017 earnings:** \$52,045.43

2017 highlights: Medicine Hat AB (Spring and Summer), Grimshaw AB

Champion, Competing at Calgary Stampede

Career highlights: 2016-2017 CFR Season Leader

Horse: TJ, gray gelding, 14 yrs old

Other occupation: Stock Contractor, Horse Trainer

Special interests: Denver Broncos football

Height and weight: 6', 160 lbs

Family: Single

Family in rodeo: Manerd (dad, timed event contractor), Lakota (sister, LBR)

# Bird and TJ Beat the Odds

The House That TJ Built." That's the name Logan Bird gave his future building project in the happy moments right after the twenty-three year-old Nanton tiedown roper won his first Canadian title.

"I believe TJ is the best tie down roping horse in Canada and one of the best in the world,' Bird stated. "He helps me so much. I would not be here if it wasn't for TJ."

The five year pro and his fourteen year-old grey gelding were unstoppable at the 2017 CFR as Bird became only the second Canadian to win the championship since Americans were invited to be a part of the CFR. The other was Al Bouchard in 2009.

Bird was very aware of what he had to do on the last day to win the title. "I knew I had a pretty good shot coming into the final round because I figured if the right guys didn't place in the round, I had it won before it started. As it went on a couple of guys missed and I figured as long as I got a time, even if I broke the barrier, I had a big enough lead in the average that just getting one caught and tied would be all I needed. I knew I had a pretty strong calf and I ran at the barrier because, as I say, I knew I could win even with a penalty but sometimes if you're late with a calf like that, they can be pretty hard to catch."

The run unfolded exactly as Bird projected. He broke out but caught the tough calf in a time of 21.6 seconds including the ten second barrier penalty. That run, coupled with a second place \$8300 average cheque, gave the southern Albertan his first Canadian title by a margin of only \$1000 over runner-up Riley Warren.

Citing a roster of Americans that included 2016 World champion and three-time Canadian title holder, Tyson Durfey, and WNFR qualifiers Blane Cox, Stetson Vest and Rhen Richard, Bird said, "When you come to the CFR, you're not just roping against anybody. You've got to be on your game because these are the best people in the world."

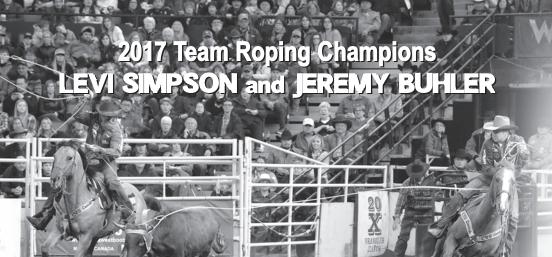
Having beaten the best in the world at

the CFR, Bird was asked if he planned to spend more time in the US and perhaps mount a bid to get to the WNFR. "To tell you the truth, I don't like to drive," the second generation roper responded. "Plus my dad and I have a stock contracting business up here and we ride horses as well and to get to the National Finals you have to be gone all the time. I like to rope up here and at some of the rodeos around Arizona when I'm down there but that's about it."

All of that, of course, is in the future. Logan Bird on this night was all about the present. "Right now I get to call myself a Canadian champion," he smiled, "and that's pretty unbelievable."

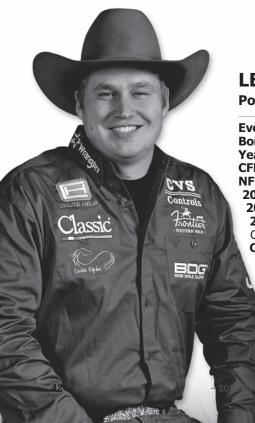
And, of course, there's the house that he needs to get started on—the one that TJ built.





# **Simpson and Buhler - Canadian Champs**

Canadian team for the WNFR, then bring home two world titles? Well, if you're Levi Simpson and Jeremy Buhler, the answer was simple—you win a couple of Canadian gold buckles to round out your collection. (continued top of next page)



# **LEVI SIMPSON - Header**

Ponoka, Alberta

**Events:** Team roping (Header), Tie down roping

Born: March 27, 1988 Year turned pro: 2008

CFR qualifications: (9) 2009-2017 NFR qualifications: (1) 2016

**2017 standings:** 1st **2017 earnings:** \$59,006.66

2017 highlights: Ponoka, AB; Olds, AB

Champion

Career highlights: 2016 World Team Roping Header Champion, 2016 NFR Team Roping Average Champion, 3x Canadian Team Roping Champion (2011, 2014, and 2017) Horses: Stetson, sorrel gelding, 10 yrs old,

Fraser, sorrel gelding, 21 yrs old **Height and weight:** 5'11, 220 lbs **Family:** Rebecca (wife) Annie, Hope

(daughters)

Relatives in rodeo: Chase (brother, TR)

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"It's very exciting," Simpson, the header for the duo, admitted just minutes after the team had nailed down the win at the last CFR to take place in the Edmonton Coliseum. "To come off a season like last year and the dream of winning the world, then come back up here and finally have a good year, and come in here in first place and outlast everyone to the end—it's great to be number one at home."

Both men were definite in stating that the tightness of the competition brought out the best in them. "I'd rather have to be four seconds flat every time that to just have to catch one," Simpson noted.

"Levi's right," Buhler added. "When it's close and you have to be fast you can just turn your head off and let all the hard work and training take over."

After a slow start to their finals—two no times and a 5.9 second run that didn't place--things turned around on (two performance) Super Saturday as Simpson and Buhler split first in the afternoon round with a 4.1 run, then duplicated that time in the evening performance to win round five outright, setting the stage for Sunday's final round.

"I changed my game plan going into Saturday," Buhler acknowledged. "Levi had been turning steers really well for me and I knew I just had to stick to my plan and be aggressive. In these smaller buildings if you try to safety up or lay off a little bit your chances dwindle for sure."

The strategy paid off on Sunday as well as the twosome posted a 4.2 second time to take second place in the round and seal the deal.

The Canadian win was the second for Simpson but the first for Buhler. And no one was happier for the bearded heeler (who would shed the facial hair early in the 2018 season) than his partner.

"It means a lot to me that Jeremy's got a Canadian championship. It's pretty special and he deserves it,"

Simpson grinned.

### **JEREMY BUHLER - Heeler**

### Arrowwood, Alberta

**Event:** Team roping (Heeler)

**Born:** Dec. 8, 1987 **Year turned pro:** 2009

**CFR qualifications:** (6) 2011-12, 2014-17

WNFR qualifications: (2) 2016-17

**2017 standings:** 1st **2017 earnings:** \$59,006.65

2017 highlights: Ponoka AB Champ, Merritt, BC Ironman Champ, 2017 Season Leader Career highlights: 2016 World Team Roping Heeler Champion, 2016 NFR Avg Winner, 2015 CFR Team Roping Avg Winner Horse: Rick James, dun gelding, 16 yrs

old (2016-2017 Team Roping Heeler

Horse of the Year)

Other occupation: Ranch Manager at

Flying W Ranch

Height and weight: 6'2, 205lbs

Family: Single

Relatives in rodeo: Clint and Kelly

(brothers, TR)

