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For Immediate Release

THE RACE IS ON!

The All Around battle in the 2016 Canadian Professional Rodeo season officially kicked off at the Strathmore Stampede when Luke Butterfield nailed down his third qualification in the steer wrestling, thus qualifying the Ponoka cowboy for the All-Around championship, a title he's never won.

The 2012 Saddle Bronc Riding Champion has been close on a couple of occasions but that third steer wrestling cheque has often proved elusive in the past. That's not the case in 2016. In fact, Butterfield's bounce-back year in the bronc riding, after missing the CFR in 2015, has unofficially catapulted him to the lead in the All Around standings. The 31 year old has over \$18,000 in total earnings and a \$1700.00 lead over defending title holder, Josh Harden, who until Strathmore was the lone qualifier.

"Winning the All-Around has always been a goal," said Butterfield, "but I kind of changed my approach to rodeo this year and it seems to be working."

The third generation rodeo cowboy noted that in the past he'd allowed the sport to consume him to the point that he was unhappy. Not making the CFR in 2015 had Butterfield re-evaluating his game plan.

"I just told myself that I'm fortunate to be doing what I do and to let myself enjoy it more and that's really worked out." That and riding brother, Brock's, yellow horse, Hat Brim, in the steer wrestling. "He's young but he's really good and I haven't done that well in the past jumping on a lot of different horses so this has been better. " It was Butterfield and Hat Brim who combined for that all-important Strathmore placing in the steer wrestling.

"That third cheque is the hardest one to get so it's nice to have that done," Butterfield chuckled.

As for the man he's trying to beat, Butterfield has high regard for the Big Valley cowboy, one of three rodeoing Harden brothers. "Josh could easily make the Finals in two events," Butterfield commented. "He's right there in the bronc riding and he's a really good bulldogger so he'll be tough." Butterfield also noted that there are others, 2014 All Around champion, Ky Marshall, and perennial contender, Kyle Thomson, who can't be counted out of the race for the All-Around buckle.

Harden, for his part, has his sights set on a second All Around title. "Yeah, it's been a goal right from the start of the season," he admitted, "But you really have to make the CFR to have a good shot at it so we'll see.

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Harden helped his pursuit of a Finals berth by splitting the bronc riding (with Jake Watson) at the North Peace Stampede in Grimshaw with an 84 score on the Kesler horse, Flash Dance.

“I had her at High Prairie just a couple of days before but my saddle was a little tight and I didn’t ride her as well as I should have there. I kind of knew what to expect the second time, so I loosened my saddle off a little and it worked out.”

Other winners at the weekend stops included tie-down roper, Logan Hofer, who built on the momentum of his recent Strathmore win by adding the first place cheque at Grimshaw, bringing his earnings over the last ten days to over \$6800 and vaulting him into the CFR conversation in the roping.

But one of the biggest stories of the weekend was the all Steer Riding event at Irricana. Hanna’s JW Hart, who had been sitting just outside the top six (and a CFR berth) “forty percent’ed ‘em” at Irricana to win over \$1000.00 and shoot up the standings in search of his first trip to Edmonton.

Dallas Burns, flankman for X6 Ranches who supplied the stock for the event had high praise for the young competitors.

“These kids brought there A game and rode 14 of 18 in the long round,” Burns enthused. “Then the short round filled with the six rankest cows going down the road. They rode four of the six. ‘Wow’ is all I can say. My hat’s off to each and every one of you kids. You put on a show.”

Next “North Run” CPRA action takes us to La Crete, AB August 9-10 and Dawson Creek, BC August 12-14.

For complete results from High Prairie, Grimshaw, the Irricana Steer Riding and the Cochrane Classic Bull Riding event, go to www.rodeocanada.com

About the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association

The Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA) with headquarters in Airdrie, Alta., is the sanctioning body for professional rodeo in Canada. The CPRA sanctions over 50 events annually with a total payout exceeding \$5.1 million. Follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat at @prorodeo-canada, like Canadian Professional Rodeo Association on Facebook, or online at RodeoCanada.com.

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