



Pro Rodeo Canada
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DUSTIN BIRD – BLAZING IN TWO EVENTS

Three for three.

For Dustin Bird, the Cutbank, Montana roper, it was three rodeos and three wins. “Yeah, that was a real nice run,” the 2012 Canadian Champion header commented.

Two of those wins came where you’d expect of a three-time WNFR qualifier - in the team roping at Sundre and High River - but it was the third result, the tie-down roping win at Wainwright that had the thirty-five year-old rope slinger grinning from ear to ear.

“It would dang sure be nice to be at the Canadian Finals Rodeo in two events,” Bird acknowledged but was quick to add, “The NFR in the team roping - that’s our priority.”

For Bird, the win at Wainwright, a Wrangler Tour rodeo was especially satisfying.

“I’ve roped calves in the past but I kind of set that aside while I was concentrating on getting to the NFR in the team roping. But my partner, Russell Cardoza’s got a terrific tie-down roping horse (Rain Drop) so I figured I should start entering the roping again.”

Bird cracked out on Rain Drop at Grande Prairie and quickly hit the pay window with placings at Hand Hills and Innisfail before the big payday at Wainwright. Bird put together a 10.1 second run to split 6/7 in the first go for \$449.42 - then added a second place \$1382.86 cheque with his 8.4 in round two. He posted a 9.9 second place run in the short round for another \$1200.00. When added to his average payoff of \$2313.23, Bird’s Wainwright total was \$5445.51 and will vault the likable Montanan into the top five in the Canadian tie-down roping standings.

“With our focus on getting to the NFR in the team roping, I know I won’t get to that many Canadian rodeos so I’m going to have to do well at the bigger ones for sure,” Bird acknowledged.

So far the drive to get to the NFR has gone well for Bird and Cardoza, his Terrebonne, Oregon heeler, especially considering the pair have been roping together for less than a year.

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“I wasn’t having a great year in 2015,” Bird related, “and had pretty well decided to shut down when Russell called me. He had a shot at the NFR and needed a partner for the last part of the year. I figured if I could help him get to Las Vegas I’d have a real good partner for this year.”

And that’s exactly how it worked out. With Bird heading for him, Cardoza grabbed the 15th and final qualifying berth at the 2015 WNFR (his fourth National Finals Rodeo appearance) and the two have continued to dominate throughout the 2016 season, with over \$40,000 won to date, a total that has them in the top three in the world standings.

And that makes the High River and Sundre results even sweeter for the blazing hot duo. At Sundre they split 1/2 with Canadian Kolton Schmidt and his Texas partner, Shay Carroll, with a 4.5 - good for \$1896.69 each. They then won High River’s Guy Weadick Days outright with a 5.8 to tuck an additional \$2243.07 into their respective bank accounts and facilitate a further move up the leaderboards in both Canada and the US.

Bird was also aware that the big weekend will give him and his partner momentum heading into Cowboy Christmas (the 1st of July run in Canada and the 4th of July rodeos in the US)

“The next ten days will tell the tale,” Bird admitted. It starts with the first performances at both Ponoka and Airdrie, followed by stops in Oakley City, Utah; Cody, Wyoming; Livingston, Montana; St Paul, Eugene and Molalla - all in Oregon - and, Bird hopes, all capped off with a return trip to Ponoka for the short round.

“The good part is with the year we’ve had so far, we’re not having to fly,” Bird noted. “We’ve set things up so we can drive everywhere and have our good horses with us.”

And if things continue the way they have for Dustin Bird and Russell Cardoza, these two cowboys better be making plans to spend time in both Edmonton and Las Vegas come fall.

Other big winners for the weekend included Oklahoma barrel racer, Cayla Melby who placed at all three rodeos, including wins in the short go and average at Wainwright for a total haul of \$6900; Texas barrel racer, Jackie Ganter who enjoyed a \$5500 weekend; Carstairs two-event roper, Kyle Lucas, who pocketed \$5000; two-time Canadian Champion bull rider, Dakota Buttar, who picked up \$4800 (including the win at Wainwright) and reigning Canadian Champion steer wrestler, Cody Cassidy who profited to the tune of \$4200 plus from his Wainwright and Sundre successes.

Find complete rodeo results at www.rodeocanada.com

Next up on the CPRA schedule are the Ponoka Stampede (June 27-July 3), Airdrie Pro Rodeo (June 28-July 2) and the Williams Lake Stampede (June 30-July 3).

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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 @prorodeocanada, like Canadian Professional Rodeo Association on Facebook, or online at RodeoCanada.com.

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