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For Immediate Release



The Gain, The Pain and \$17.04 ... An unofficial look at the 2016 Cinch Pro Series Final

Probably no two contestants better personify the drama of the Cinch Pro Series Canada Series Final than Alberta team ropers Steele DePaoli and Kasper Roy.

DePaoli and Roy entered the weekend event as distinct longshots. Both were sitting 18th in the Canadian standings, \$2500 back of the 12th and final CFR qualifying berth with six teams between them and every contestant's dream—Edmonton in November.

But the duo overcame a sluggish September to come up big when it mattered most. A 5.4 second run won the opening round on Friday night. Then the Mossleigh heeler, Roy, and Longview's DePaoli managed a 4/4 split in Saturday night's second round with a 5.6. The two runs meant a second place finish in the average and a total payoff of \$3281.25 per man. The payday vaulted six time CFR qualifier DePaoli all the way to 8th in the final standings with two time CFR contestant, Roy, climbing to 10th spot on the heeling side.

"We definitely had a game plan," DePaoli admitted. "Kasper and I talked about it and we both thought we should just try to win the average and if we happened to do really good in the rounds, that was just an added bonus. Then when we won that first round, we knew we had a chance to be up there in the average. We figured if we caught our steer on Saturday we'd be going to Edmonton. I stayed off the barrier and took an extra swing in that last round just to be sure. And Kasper took an extra swing too. The runs we made there were pretty well exactly like the runs we'd been making in practice the last few weeks."

And being a couple of veteran guys helped too. "Yeah, this was probably as relaxed as we've been all season," DePaoli added. "One thing I've learned over the years is how not to panic. I guess I never thought I wasn't going to be at the CFR but there comes a time when you have to do something about it. And it was cool that this was our time."

DePaoli had high praise for the Pro Series Final. "It's a great concept for competitors and it's awesome for the crowd too."

The Cinch Pro Series Final's success was part of a special month for the second generation roper. Three weeks earlier, he and Becky Treich became engaged. For now DePaoli plans a little R and R with a sheep hunt in the offing before the serious practicing for the CFR gets started.

"If the weather stays decent, I'd like to do quite a bit right here at home," he noted. "And I'll have to talk to Kasper about our game plan for Edmonton but I think if we made our goal to win the average up there as well, things should turn out okay."



But the team roping drama didn't end with the big move from Roy and DePaoli. Defending Canadian Champion (header) Roland McFadden hung on for 11th spot in the final standings and a chance to defend his title. And with families, fans and contestants working calculators and texting furiously back and forth, the battle for the final spot was the most dramatic of all. Clint Buhler who didn't qualify for the Calgary event, had to watch helplessly as Riley Warren (and others) charged up the standings. In the end it was Warren who (roping with Buhler's brother Jeremy at the Series Finals) came closest... his quest for 12th place coming up just \$17.04 short. Cue the sigh of relief from Clint Buhler.

And the nail-biting didn't end there. On the heeling side, Merritt, BC cowboy, Spencer Rutherford, roping with Strathmore header Denver Johnson, was 13th heading into the weekend. The duo caught last hole (4th) in the average for \$625, enough to sneak Rutherford into the top twelve. He finished up 10th on the season. And the moves into the standings by Roy and Rutherford meant that Chase Simpson of Claresholm hung on to the final CFR berth while Saskatchewan roper, Brady Chappel, and McFadden's heeling partner, Tyrel Flewelling, were bumped from the top twelve. Flewelling, the three time and defending champion heeler from Lacombe, finished just \$24.19 back of Simpson. Rutherford too will have to find another partner for Edmonton as Johnson, with fewer rodeos through the season, fell short in his CFR chase.

The Cinch Pro Rodeo Canada Series Final Team Roping Champions were Klay Whyte and Brett Buss with earnings of \$4218.75 each.

The team roping was not the only high-stakes action taking place at the Agrium Western Event Centre. In the bull riding, 2006 Canadian champion, Tanner Girletz, was another guy with a large mountain to climb heading into the weekend. The third generation talent rolled into Calgary with a broken arm (his free hand) and a \$1200 deficit to make up if he wanted to extend his season. Girletz bucked off Friday night, leaving himself one final chance to add an eighth CFR qualification to his resume. But the thirty year-old was ready. A spectacular 86 point ride on Saturday night on Outlaw Buckers' Tennessee Whisky was enough to win the round and guarantee Girletz third in the average. The \$2500 haul was more than sufficient to jump the popular Carstairs cowboy into the top twelve and relegate Meeting Creek's Garrett Green to spectator status.

In tie down roping, it was the veteran Rimbey hand, Dean Edge, making the decisive move. Edge was his consistent self, placing in both go-rounds and the average to earn just over \$2000, enough to move him into the top twelve and slide Virgil Poffenroth to the sidelines. Riley Warren, who narrowly missed the cut in the team roping, nevertheless had a profitable weekend. The timed event specialist earned \$4687.50 overall and will be heading to Edmonton in the tie-down roping.

The overall Cinch Final Tie-Down Roping Champion was Alwin Bouchard with a total of \$3906.25.

For the second year in a row, Taber's Nancy Csabay enjoyed a stellar couple of days in Calgary. A year ago, she and her talented mare, Wicked, used a big Cinch Pro Series Final to capture season leader honours. This time around the stakes were a little higher as the reigning Canadian Champion was sitting in 13th spot and needing a little more magic if she wanted to get back to Edmonton to defend her title. The twosome responded to the challenge by finishing third in both rounds and winning the average to carry Csabay (\$3750) to the Calgary victory and punch her ticket to the CFR.



Csabay's effort left rookie Colby Gilbert in 12th place and heading to her first CFR. Kerilee Noval, who had been sitting precariously in that 12th spot entering weekend action, had not qualified for Calgary and ended up on the outside looking in.

The remaining events were no less exciting but didn't see the dramatic position changes noted above. In the bareback riding, late season surges by a youthful trio meant that all three would make their first appearances at the CFR. Eastend, Saskatchewan's Dantan Bertsch, Sherwood Park cowboy, Kody Lamb and Okotoks hand, Pascal Isabelle, finished up 10th, 11th and 12th respectively. Michael Solberg earned the Championship with \$4843.75 won.

Josh Harden, the defending All-Around champion, and the 12th man in the saddle bronc riding standings prior to the Calgary production, protected his CFR berth with a solid showing. But the story in the bronc riding was Sylvan Lake's Lane Cust. The two time novice champion won both go rounds and the average to ride out of Calgary with a cool \$5000 in his Cinch jeans and a Resistol Rookie of the Year title as well. Cust's performance carried him past first year steer wrestler, Brendan Laye, to capture the top rookie honours.

No significant changes were recorded in the steer wrestling as a couple of central Alberta doggers, Rowdy Hays in 11th place and Brock Butterfield in 12th, neither of whom were in the Calgary Series Finals, were able to weather the storm. The 2012 All-Around Champion, Travis Reay of Mayerthorpe came up just short in his effort to catch one or both and qualify for a fifth consecutive CFR berth. The 2016 Cinch Pro Final Steer Wrestling Champion was Straws Milan (\$4687.50)

For complete unofficial Cinch Pro Rodeo Canada Series Finals results, go to 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 approves over 50 events annually with a total payout exceeding \$5.1 million. Join us for our premiere event - the 43rd edition of the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) November 9-13, 2016 in Edmonton, Alberta at Rexall Place. 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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