



A Season of Surprises

Airdrie, ALTA – August 22, 2017

For barrel racer, Diane Skocdopole, the 2017 pro rodeo season has been an “out of body experience.” Skocdopole wanted to get an early start to the year and with CPRA rodeos getting going sooner than semi-pro events, decided to kick off her season at Camrose. The result—a win for her and her eight year-old mare “Sonic” (JG Hectors Pizzazz)—was “a complete surprise and meant I had to make some decisions,” related the Big Valley cowgirl.

The decision was to “buy her card and see where it goes and let the mare pick what would happen. “She’s been better indoors up to now,” Skocdopole acknowledged, which led to another surprise... three of her four CPRA wins have been outdoors: Innisfail, La Crete and this weekend’s Pincher Creek Pro Rodeo. The other major factor in her success was a second place finish at Edmonton’s cash-rich K-Days Rodeo in July.

The first place finish at Pincher Creek, coupled with a second place cheque at Jasper meant a \$2690 weekend, pushing the first year pro’s season earnings total to over \$18,500, making her all but a lock to get to her first CFR. The productive weekend also took Skocdopole to the lead in the season rookie standings as she went by teenage sensation Taylor Manning, who was blanked for one of the few times this year.

“Sonic was really strong going in and I had to check her and kind of help her find first,” Skocdopole said of her Pincher Creek run. “I don’t usually have to do that. Usually I just get her started and hang on and let her do her thing.”

Skocdopole and the Frenchman’s guy granddaughter, with cow bloodlines on the mare side, went to some futurities when Sonic was a five year-old, then qualified for the FCA Finals together a year later. A little more seasoning in the mare’s seven year-old year set the stage for the duo’s outstanding 2017 campaign.

“I got her as a two year-old and did the training on her; she’s kind of a do-everything horse,” Skocdopole added. “and a fun fact, (husband) Dale placed on her in the team roping when she was six.” Dale needed a heading horse for Medicine Hat and Bonnyville. He took Sonic and won a fifth place cheque at Medicine Hat, making the mare a two event money earner in pro rodeo.

Speaking of Dale, he and brother Wayne saw their 3.7 second time (the second fastest in CPRA team roping history), equaled on the weekend. A couple more teenage talents, the Wainwright, Alberta-based Graham brothers posted the amazing time en route to the win and \$1254 each. Dawson (just graduated from high school) and Dillon (going into grade eleven) were the second last team in Sunday’s final performance and had the full grandstand clapping and cheering as their blistering 3.7 was announced.

And the latest steer wrestler to be mounting a charge at a CFR berth is Joe Guze. The Drayton Valley bulldogger, who was 15th in the standings going into the weekend, put together a winning run of 3.4 seconds at the Cranbrook Pro Rodeo to go with a 5/6 split at Jasper for a \$2057 total that moves him very

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much into Canadian Finals Rodeo contention. The battle for the final few CFR qualifications in the steer wrestling promises to go down to the final weekend of the season and is one where the Grass Roots Final (September 29 and 30 at the Agrium Western EventsCentre in Calgary) could play a major role.

For complete weekend rodeo results go to rodeocanada.com

The coming weekend will see pro cowboys and cowgirls making their way to Okotoks, Alberta for the Okotoks Pro Rodeo, August 25-27. The long time event will enjoy a new venue this year - an outdoor setting just north of the town of Okotoks.

About the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association

The Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA) with headquarters in Airdrie, Alberta 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 September 29-30, 2017 for our 4th Annual Grass Roots Final (at the Agrium Western Event Centre, Stampede Park in Calgary, Alberta) and for our premiere event - the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) November 8-12, 2017 at Northlands Coliseum in Edmonton, Alberta. 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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