



Down to the Wire

It's a very special part of every rodeo season - the final few frenzied weeks of drama and tension as cowboys and cowgirls battle for the last qualifying berths to the CFR.

The second last regular season rodeo - the Dallas Sunstrum Memorial - had plenty of that drama September 21-22 in Brooks, Alberta.

Holden, Alberta barrel racer, Rene Leclercq, took a big step in the right direction with a blistering 14.388 second run to take home the first place cheque of \$1317.83. Riding her ten year old mare, Flit, Leclercq knew the time was ripe for a big run.

"The girl I'm chasing, Justine Elliott, had gone just before and run a "4" (13.465) and I knew I had to go for broke so Flit and I went for the gusto," Leclercq commented. "My mare felt really smooth and snappy in the turns; she was really good."

The win moved Leclercq to 12th place overall, just \$147 behind Elliott, and \$1900 ahead of Renee Rae Willis who sits in 13th spot. The fly in the ointment, for both Leclercq and Elliott, is that Willis has qualified for the Grass Roots Final while neither of the other two have.

"I've been in this position before, where it comes down to the last rodeos," Leclercq noted. "A couple of years ago, I missed entries for the Grass Roots and ended up missing CFR by just a few dollars. Last year was better as these last few rodeos and the Grass Roots Final sealed the deal for me for the CFR."

As for the tension of having to wait for the Grass Roots results to know her own fate, Leclercq was philosophical, "There are people there who will be texting me, but to be honest, Renee (Willis) has a really nice horse and I'm okay with whatever happens. I've had a really good year, especially the last part of the season, no matter what."

Another big mover at the Dallas Sunstrum Memorial was twelve time Canadian Champion, Curtis Cassidy, who topped the steer wrestling field with a 3.9 second run for \$1210.93. The win was Cassidy's second in a row (he won Oldstoberfest a week ago) and propelled the number one steer wrestler in the world to 12th place in the Canadian standings.

"I start every year planning not to be in this position in the last weeks of the season. Yet here I am again," the Donalda cowboy chuckled. Cassidy leads the number thirteen man, Chance Butterfield, by less than \$150 and the 14th place man, Brock Butterfield, by less than \$600. The good news for Cassidy is that he has qualified for the Grass Roots Final - where neither of the Butterfield cousins have. That doesn't mean it will be easy for Cassidy or any of the steer wrestlers scrambling for the final qualifying berths. Less than \$2600 separates 9th place and 17th place in the standings with only the Grass Roots Final and the Hanna Indoor Pro Rodeo - both next weekend - remaining.

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The races are equally dramatic in a number of other events - setting the stage for an action-packed Grass Roots Final September 27-28 at Stampede Park in Calgary and the Hanna Indoor Pro Rodeo September 28-30.

For complete unofficial Brooks results, Grass Roots Final and Hanna Rodeo information, go to www.rodeocanada.com

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. The organization holds the Grass Roots Final September 27-28 at Stampede Park in Calgary, Alberta and their premiere event - the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) - at the ENMAX Centrium, Westerner Park in Red Deer, Alberta, October 30 - November 4. Follow the CPRA on Twitter and Instagram @prorodeocanada, 'Like' Canadian Professional Rodeo Association on Facebook or online at RodeoCanada.com.

For more information:

Barb Poulsen
Communications and Media
Canadian Professional Rodeo Association
Mobile: 403 625-9225
Phone: 403 625-2797
Email: media@rodeocanada.com

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