



Pozzobon Rip(p)s It Up at the WNFR

While several of the Canadian storylines were exciting at the 60th annual Wrangler National Finals Rodeo, none was more so than the one featuring first-time qualifier, Carman Pozzobon. The British Columbia cowgirl, riding her talented mare Ripp, (Ripn Lady), posted her fastest time of the week, a 13.68 for third in the round and a cheque for \$15,653. But more importantly, Pozzobon was the only cowgirl to keep the barrels standing through all ten rounds, which means that in addition to her three go-round placings, Pozzobon won the first-place aggregate cheque of \$67,269 to give her over \$117,884 in Vegas. That left her in 4th place overall (she came to the WNFR in 15th place) with a season money total of \$204,831.

But the last night was not without a little drama as Pozzobon and Ripp brushed one of the barrels, putting it on tilt and dangerously close to a costly five second penalty. "I looked back at that barrel and said you better stay up, damn it," Pozzobon laughed after the run. And like so many barrel racers she was quick to credit her horse. "I don't know how she did it," the 2017 Canadian Champion admitted. "Even when I was falling apart, she was the one that was keeping it together. She's amazing."

It was Cotulla, Texas cowgirl Hailey Kinsel who won her first world title. Though she finished out of the money in the final round, Kinsel was dominant over the ten days with four go-round wins en route to the championship and a record \$350,699 in season earnings.

Tim O'Connell was the first World Champion crowned on Saturday night. The talented Zwingle, Iowa bareback rider made it three in a row as he put the finishing touches on another brilliant season with a round ten 5/6 split 87--point ride on a J Bar J buckler called All Pink. That ride propelled O'Connell to a ½ split of the aggregate and a season total of \$319,801 - a \$63,000 margin of victory over second place man Steven Dent of Mullen, Nebraska who was the other half of the aggregate split with O'Connell. The lone Canadian in the field, Manitoba's Orin Larsen, fashioned a remarkable story of his own as he overcame the effects of knee surgery just three weeks before the Finals to finish eighth in the aggregate with \$92,000 earned over the ten days of the WNFR. The likable four-time finalist won round seven at the Thomas and Mack Arena and placed in four other rounds en route to wrapping up the season in eighth spot with \$222,732 in overall earnings.

Tyler Waguespack of Gonzales, Louisiana won the second steer wrestling title of his career. The newly-wed Cajun's 5.1 second run was out of the money in the final round that was won by Nick Guy with a 3.7. But Waguespack finished first in the average and collected \$260,000 for his season total to give him a comfortable \$43,000 cushion over the second place man, Montana's Bridger Chambers. The two Canadian qualifiers, Curtis Cassidy and Scott Guentner both finished out of the money in the final round. Cassidy, the Donalda, Alberta man who owns 12 Canadian titles, came to Las Vegas as the number one man in the world standings and finished up 4th overall with \$188,355. Guentner, the Provost, Alberta product and newly-crowned Canadian titleist finished just \$1500 behind Cassidy in fifth place overall. Guentner took home a tidy \$94,000 from Las Vegas with Cassidy pocketing \$82,000.

It was a tough night for the two Canadian saddle bronc riders in round ten of the Finals. Two-time and reigning Canadian Champion Clay Elliot bucked off in round ten at the seven second mark. Nevertheless, the Nanton cowboy placed in three rounds and will take \$44,692 back to Canada as he finished up 10th in the world standings. 2016 World Champion, Zeke Thurston, was also bucked off in round ten and while

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that spelled an end to the Big Valley cowboy's championship aspirations, Thurston placed in eight rounds, including a couple of go-round wins, for \$149,400 as he finished up 3rd in both the aggregate and world standings.

The saddle bronc title went to the popular Wade Sundell, sending two world championship buckles to Iowa competitors. Sundell was 87.5 for 4th in the round ten. That gave him second in the aggregate and when Rusty Wright was disqualified for missing out the Calgary Stampede's Wild Cherry, the race was over and Sundell was the champion for the first time in his outstanding career.

Clay Smith and Paul Eaves won their first World title in a 'down to the wire' final round in the team roping. Though the talented team has been in the lead in the World standings for most of the 10 day Final - picking up two round wins and 5 additional placings along the way - the title was determined tonight in a close race that saw Kaleb Driggers and Junior Nogueira put the pressure on with a 4.1 second run - good for second in the round. Smith and Eaves roped in 4.4 - which gave them third in the round and third in the average... \$174,576 each in WNFR earnings, \$289,921 overall and the title. And despite not placing in Round 10, Aaron Tsinigine and Trey Yates stayed in the lead to win the Aggregate - courtesy of a very consistent ten day run - with placings in 7 of 10 rounds for \$128,461 each. Tsinigine ended his year in with \$212,506 and Yates with \$226,900 - 3rd in the World overall standings.

Prior to the final round of this Finals, the big question making the rounds was what's wrong with Sage Kimzey. The four-time champion bull rider had come to Las Vegas with an insurmountable lead but he'd struggled through the first nine rounds, riding only three of his bulls. But on Saturday night, Kimzey answered the question about what was wrong with the Texas superstar. The answer—nothing.

Kimzey rode Beutler and Son's Record Rack's Shootin' Stars to the highest bull riding score of the week—93 points. The Strong City, Oklahoma talent won his fifth title in his five year career and finished up with an amazing \$415,252.

It came down to the final round in the tie-down roping before Caleb Smidt was declared both the World Champion and the Aggregate winner. The Huntsville, Texas cowboy, who won his first title in 2015, placed in 6 out of 10 rounds (83.70 seconds on ten head) for a total of \$142,846 in WNFR earnings and \$232,817 for the year. Tonight's round was won by the legendary Trevor Brazile who roped in 7.2 seconds.

In fact, it was a fitting conclusion to one of the greatest stories in the history of rodeo. Trevor Brazile, the "King of the Cowboys" announced earlier in the week that he was reducing his schedule after this year in order to focus more time on his family. And in a script only he could write, the brilliant Texan won one more title, his twenty-fourth, this one the All-Around championship with 336,679 giving him \$25,000 more than brother-in-law, Tuf Cooper. That dollar margin was almost exactly the difference between Brazile's final round winning run in the tie-down roping and Cooper's no-time, the result of a disqualification for a jerk-down of the calf.

For WNFR final results, stories and highlights, go to <http://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 26-27 at Stampede Park in Calgary, Alberta and their premiere event - the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) - at the

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ENMAX Centrium, Westerner Park in Red Deer, Alberta, October 29 - November 3. Follow the CPRA on Twitter and Instagram @prorodeocanada, 'Like' Canadian Professional Rodeo Association on Facebook or online at RodeoCanada.com.

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