



Nineties Night at the National Finals Rodeo

The grey did it again.

Virgil, the amazing 10 year-old gelding from the C5 Rodeo firm now holds the CFR and WNFR Arena records. A month ago, the two-time and reigning Canadian and World Champion Bareback horse was 90.25 with Jake Vold aboard to set the all-time CFR record. And tonight, with the California talent, Clayton Biglow's hand in the riggin, the score was 93 spectacular points as the accolades and records continue to accumulate for one of the greatest Canadian bucking horses of all time. In a round when 86.5 points did not place, Manitoba's Orin Larsen collected his second cheque of the Finals with his second 87 point ride. But where 87 earned the long lean Canadian a second place payoff in the third go round, this 87 score was good only for sixth in the round and a \$4230 stipend. Tim O'Connell continues to lead the world standings as he vies for his third title in succession with the Utah cowboy, Caleb Bennett in second place and four-time World Champion, Kaycee Field in third spot.

And Virgil wasn't the only Canadian in the nineties. In the saddle bronc riding, three-time World Champion, Zeke Thurston was a spectacular 90 points on Sankey Pro Rodeo and Robinson Bulls' Marquee while the two-time and reigning Canadian titleist, Clay Elliott, was just a half point back at 89.5 on the Calgary Stampede's outstanding Stampede Warrior. Amazingly, there were three guys with even higher scores—go-round winner Wade Sundell at 92, then Ryder Wright and Rusty Wright at 91 and 90.5 respectively. For Thurston the \$11,000 cheque keeps him 4th in the aggregate and 7th in the world standings while the \$6769 payday for Elliott represented just his second placing to date as he sits 10th overall.

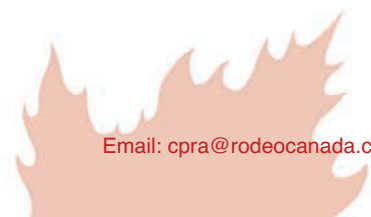
Thurston was philosophical about the night. "That was a real good bronc riding," he acknowledged. "The horses were amazing and everybody rode so good." At the halfway point, Thurston's happy with his Finals to date. "Yeah, shoot I've placed in every round so far except for last night when they threw me off right at the whistle. But I'm feeling great and I'm having a blast. Can't wait for the next one."

It was a little tougher night for the two Canadians in the steer wrestling. After Canadian Champion, Scott Guenther won go-round number three and fellow Canuck, Curtis Cassidy followed up with a go-round win of his own on night number four at the Thomas and Mack Arena, the fifth round was not kind to the teammates. Guenther managed only a 5.1 second time to finish 9th in the round and out of the money. And for Cassidy, the holder of twelve Canadian championship buckles, the news was even worse as the second generation Donald, Alberta cowboy took his second no time of the week. While Cassidy continues to lead the world standings, he has fallen to 13th in the aggregate while Guenther, the Provost, Alberta dogger dropped to 3rd in the world behind Will Lummus who won the round with a 3.3 run. Guenther is in 10th place in the aggregate.

Header Clay Smith and his partner, former Canadian Champion Paul Eaves, bested the team roping field with a 3.8 second run and are now leading the world standings. But Kaleb Driggers and Junior

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Nogueira who dropped to second place overall, lead the average while Smith and Eaves are in fifth in the all-important and very lucrative average standings (where the win pays over \$67,000).

Carman Pozzobon who carries the Canadian colours in the barrel race was a 14.06 in the fifth round, good only for a 10/11 split but more importantly for the Savona, BC cowgirl, she is sitting third in the aggregate at the halfway point of the rodeo. Hudson, Colorado's Ivy Conrado posted a 13.49 to win the round but Hailey Kinsel, the Cotulla, Texas barrel racer continues to lead the world standings as she moved past the \$200,000 mark in season earnings.

Trevor Brazile, Ryan Jarrett and Reese Reimer all checked in at the 7.5 second mark to split first in the tie-down roping event for \$20,871.79 each. For Jarrett, the 2005 World All-Around Champion, it was his first cheque of the finals. Shane Hanchey and Marty Yates remain 1-2 in the World standings, though neither man earned cheques in round 5. Yates was long - 14.6; Hanchey took a no-time. The result was a drop in average for both... Hanchey from 8th to 12th, Yates from 1st to 4th. Ryle Smith sits atop the average standings with 40.20 seconds on 5 head; 2015 World Champion, Caleb Smidt is just 3/100ths behind. This might be the closest race of the Finals with at least eight men, several of them former champions, with a shot at the gold buckle. And for Brazile, who is vying for his twenty-fourth—and maybe last world title, as he has announced he'll be cutting back on his rodeo schedule and commitments when this season is completed—the “King of the Cowboys” extended his lead to \$28,000 in the All Around race over his brother-in-law and last year's Champion, Tuf Cooper.

The parade of 90 point rides didn't end in the bareback riding and saddle bronc riding. Eli Vastbinder of Union Grove, North Carolina made his first ride of the 2018 WNFR a memorable one as he captured the round and the \$26,230 with a 91 point effort on Beutler and Son Rodeo's Record Rack's Shootin' Stars. Sage Kimzey inched closer to his fifth successive bull riding title at just 24 years old. The Texan was fifth in the round with a 78 point ride but maintained his massive cushion over the rest of the field with his \$358,000 in season earnings, \$140,000 ahead of the second place Montana bull rider, Parker Breeding.

For WNFR detailed results, daily stock draws, 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 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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