



CANADIAN PROFESSIONAL RODEO ASSOCIATION

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For immediate release

Thurston Leads Canadians at WNFR Round One

Canada landed on the leaderboard in the Saddle Bronc riding event on Night One at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo as two time World and Canadian Champion Zeke Thurston made an outstanding ride. The Big Valley, Alberta bronc rider marked 88.5 points on Cervi Championship Rodeo's 341 Vitalix Wyatt Earp. Thurston split the round win with Montana cowboy Chase Brooks who rode Sankey Pro Rodeo's Pendleton Whisky's Marquee with both men pocketing \$24,167.

"That horse had a couple of pretty good moves out of there," Thurston grinned. "Kind of had me wondering where he was at. But I got sat back down, the horse really bucked and I finished the ride. It was good."

The reigning Canadian Champion closed ground on the leaders and moved to fourth place in the World standings. Other Canadian bronc riders included Kolby Wanchuk with an 84, Dawson Hay, 82.5, Layton Green, 80.5 and Ben Anderson who bucked off in round one. Canadian horses were also excellent on opening night. Outlaw Buckers' Lunatic party carried Tegan Smith to 84.5 for a 5-6 split and another Outlaw Bucker's horse, OLS Tubs Magic Carpet bucked off Wyatt Casper.

Four time Canadian and 2013 World Champion tie-down roper, Shane Hanchey, won the round with a smokin' 7.4 second run to add to his event lead. The Sulphur, Louisiana hand tipped his hat to a couple of special horses after his run.

"Hollywood couldn't write this script. Losing TJ ten days ago and stepping up on Logan Bird's other horse (Canadian Tie-Down Horse of the Year, Peso)... it's too good a story for people not to know."

CFR tie-down qualifiers Ty Harris (7.7) and Ryan Jarrett (8.3) were second and third on the night.

Kansas bareback rider, Jess Pope, took the round win in performance one; the two time NFR qualifier scored 90.5 points on Pickett Pro Rodeo's 170 Night Crawler. 2018 Canadian Champion Richmond Champion was 83 to finish just out of the money while Inglis, Manitoba's Orin Larsen marked 81 points.

In the steer wrestling, Dirk Tavenner and Riley Duvall split the round with speedy 3.7 second runs (\$24,167 each). Duvall was mounted on Dr Pepper - a horse that came through the Nugent-Wilson horse program in Alberta, Canada. Canadians Scott Guenther and Curtis Cassidy earned 5.0 and 5.6 respectively - finishing out of the money on the first night.

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A quick 4.0 flat topped the Team Roping courtesy of Tyler Wade/Trey Yates. World and Canadian Champion Jeremy Buhler - who is teamed up with CFR qualifier Rhen Richard - caught a leg to be 9.5 seconds and out of the money.

Ladies Barrel Racing saw several speedy runs including those of Cheyenne Wimberley and Amanda Welsh who split the round - both clocking 13.77 seconds. Three time and defending World Champion Hailey Kinsel finished third with a 13.78 while four time Canadian Champion Lisa Lockhart ran a clean 14.13 to be down on the leaderboard.

Round one bull riding saw a nice pen of bulls featured at the Thomas and Mack. Former PBR World Champion - but NFR first timer - JB Mauney and two time Finals qualifier Ky Hamilton shared top honours with a pair of 87.5 point rides... Mauney on Painted Pony Championship Rodeo's Cocktail Diarrhea and Hamilton on Hurst & TNT Pro Rodeo's Rip. 2019 CFR qualifier and six time World Champion Sage Kimzey was 87 to earn third place and increase his lead atop the World standings.

* Interview quotes courtesy of the <https://www.thecowboychannel.com/>

* See complete results at <https://prorodeo.com/nfr/results>

The Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA) with headquarters in Airdrie, Alberta is the official sanctioning body for Professional Rodeo in Canada. The CPRA approves 55 events annually with a total payout exceeding \$5.7 million. The organization oversees the Pro Tour Finals each fall in Armstrong, BC; holds their premiere event - the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) - at Westerner Park in Red Deer, AB in early November; and endorses the Maple Leaf Circuit Finals as part of Canadian Western Agribition in Regina, SK. Follow the CPRA on Twitter and Instagram @prorodeocanada, 'Like' Canadian Professional Rodeo Association on Facebook or online at RodeoCanada.com.

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PROFESSIONAL RODEO IN CANADA