



CANADIAN PROFESSIONAL RODEO ASSOCIATION

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2021 Champions Crowned at Wrangler National Finals Rodeo

It was a two man race in the bareback riding going into the final round of the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. Kaycee Feild entered the round wanting to lock down a sixth World title while second year WNFR qualifier, Jess Pope, needed a huge night and a little luck from the rodeo gods to unseat the second generation Utah superstar. When the dust settled and the smoke cleared, the veteran prevailed. But it wasn't without drama. Jess Pope earned the round win with a 92 point ride on Frontier Rodeo's Gun Fire giving the Kansas cowboy a second straight aggregate win. But Feild was not to be denied making a sensational ride of his own (89.5 on Pickett Pro Rodeo's New Scarlet) for second in the round. Total money for the second generation Utah talent was \$357,419.52, just \$17,000 ahead of Pope. Inglis, Manitoba's Orin Larsen missed his horse out on night ten but ended up with overall WNFR earnings of \$59,639.63 and a total on the year of \$157,483.32.

Tyler Waguespack knew when he bulldogged his final steer in 4.2 that he had won his third World title. The Louisiana cowboy finished third in the round and second in the aggregate. Will Lummus, who came into the final round with the best shot at overtaking Waguespack was 4.3 for fourth place which gave the Mississippi bulldogger the aggregate win and second place overall. Waguespack's earnings totalled \$289,790 to Lummus' \$248,168 for a \$40,000 margin. Canada's Curtis Cassidy saved the best for the last as the Donalda, Alberta cowboy split the win with Dirk Tavenner with both cowboys registering 4.0 second runs. Cassidy's WNFR earnings were \$38,521 with \$114,825.61 for the year. Fellow Albertan Scott Guenthner made his final WNFR run a winner. The Provost, Alberta cowboy, who announced that 2021 is his last WNFR, was 5.1 on the final day for a sixth place cheque making his Finals total \$23,280 and his season total, \$98,234.19.

The team roping leaders going into round 10 - Kaleb Driggers in the heading side and heeler, Junior Nogueira - did what they had to do to win the 2021 Team Roping title. The pair did not place in the final round but roped their steer in 7.1 to finish third in the aggregate and maintain their first place standing. The aggregate winners, header, Andrew Ward and Buddy Hawkins on the heels, wound up roping all ten steers in a total time of 54.70. Not only did they win the aggregate but they set a new record with their time on ten head and beat the second place team by an amazing 44 seconds. The Alberta-Utah combination of former World Champion heeler Jeremy Buhler and CFR heading qualifier Rhen Richard had a somewhat disappointing finish to an otherwise strong week as they didn't place in round ten. But the duo finished fourth in the aggregate with WNFR earnings of \$104,053 and overall earnings of \$207,223.28 for Buhler and \$208,256 for Richard.

In a spectacular down-to-the-wire finish in the saddle bronc riding, it was Stetson Wright - who had already clinched the All Around Championship - who made an outstanding 93 point ride on Cervi's Vitalix Ricky Bobby to win the round. The win gave Stetson eighth place in the aggregate and enough money to hold off brother, Ryder Wright and aggregate Champion, Brody Cress for the Bronc Riding Crown. Stetson finished the year with \$343,523 in bronc riding earnings, just

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\$1200 more than brother, Ryder. Cress earned \$325,745 - only \$18,000 behind the winner. Second generation Canadian bronc rider, Dawson Hay made his first trip to the WNFR pay window a good one as he matched up with Macza Pro Rodeo's Ols Tubs Get Smart to the tune of 90 points and the second place cheque (\$21,336). Hay's 2021 total earnings are \$151,685. Two time World and Canadian Champion Zeke Thurston, who enjoyed several trips to the pay window during the ten days, was 89 on Andrews' All or Nothin for fifth. Thurston, who placed third in the aggregate, pocketed \$129,526 in WNFR earnings (the highest Canadian money earner) and \$229,329 for the year. Meeting Creek, Alberta's Layton Green enjoyed three go-round placings and added a sixth place aggregate cheque for \$63,775 in WNFR earnings and \$166,022 overall. Sherwood Park's Kolby Wanchuk finished up his finals with \$31,336 in WNFR money and \$118,194 for the year while Rocky Mountain House bronc rider, Ben Andersen, took home \$26,111 - \$108,345 for the season.

Caleb Smidt, who was so solid during all ten days of this WNFR, won his third title and \$318,455. He was 7.8 in the final round for a fourth place cheque and won the aggregate with an 8.0 second cushion over former World Champion Haven Meged, who finished second in both the aggregate and World standings. Disaster struck season leader Shane Hanchey, who took a no time and fell to eighth place in the aggregate and fourth overall. Marty Yates won the round with the first sub seven second run of the Finals - a 6.9.

Like Mom, like daughter. Texas cowgirl Jordon Briggs (and her 2021 Barrel Horse of the Year, Famous Lil Jet, or Rollo) put an exclamation point on her first Barrel Racing Championship and the accompanying gold buckle. Briggs finished sixth in the round with a 13.72 to add a record-setting aggregate win to her impressive Finals. What makes Briggs' and Rollo's season even more remarkable is that the team did not knock down a single barrel throughout the year. Defending Champion, Hailey Kinsel, tipped a barrel in the final round to finish third in the aggregate and second overall. Dona Kay Rule picked up her second go-round win of the Finals with a 13.58.

It came down to Sage Kimzey having to ride his last bull of the 2021 WNFR to clinch his seventh Bull Riding Championship. When Josh Frost made a 92.5 ride on Powder River Rodeo's Top Shelf, the pressure was on the man who had led the season standings from wire to wire. But Sage Kimzey did what Sage Kimzey does and rode Greeley Hat Works Centrefold from Cervi Championship Rodeo for 88 points to split 2-3 in the round. Frost won the aggregate - riding an impressive seven of his ten bulls at the Thomas and Mack Arena. Kimzey finished third in the aggregate and ended up with \$411,465 for the season.

* 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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