



CANADIAN PROFESSIONAL RODEO ASSOCIATION

WEEKEND RODEO HIGHLIGHTS

- Lea Park, Rocky Mountain House, Bonnyville, Brooks/Newell -

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For immediate release

A four-rodeo weekend can have a major impact on the standings. And this weekend was a good example. The four-day Alberta run that took in stops at Marwayne (Lea Park Rodeo), Brooks (Newell Pro Rodeo), Rocky Mountain House (Rocky Pro Rodeo) and Bonnyville Pro Rodeo also saw a push from several CPRA athletes with American addresses coming north to start their run at the Canadian Finals Rodeo.

But it was the Australian-born Canadian, Strawbs Jones, who made the big move in the bareback riding with the win at the SMS Equipment Pro Tour Rodeo at Lea Park and a tie for top honours at Bonnyville. The two-time CFR qualifier entered the weekend in 10th place on the season leaderboard but will jump up a few spots after his solid effort.

“A weekend like that gives you the confidence to keep going out there and having fun,” Jones acknowledged, “and financially it gives you the freedom to go.”

Drawing horses like the Calgary Stampede’s Disco Party and Outlaw Buckers’ Buckwheat doesn’t hurt either. Jones was 86 on Disco Party (\$2500) at Lea Park and 85.5 on Buckwheat (\$1096) at Bonnyville. “I didn’t do a lot of research on Disco Party. I knew Kaycee Feild [six time World Champion] had been 90 on him at Fort Worth and he was another big, really good Calgary horse. Everybody’s really excited about him,” the Drayton Valley, AB hand added. “And Buckwheat was feeling good and had a great day. He’s just a lot of fun.”

As excited as the likeable Aussie is about riding bareback horses, he’s just as excited about his life in Canada. He received his Canadian citizenship in the contestant parking lot at the Ponoka Stampede last year and he’s very clear that he will remain in this country for the rest of his life. “Australia’s a great country but I fell in love with the lifestyle here when I first came to Canada in 2015. Everyone was so welcoming, and I just feel totally at home here.”

Barrel racer Bertina Olafson is fast becoming known as a veteran in the sport. Maybe because the talented horsewoman burst onto the scene in 2018, won the CPRA Barrel Racing Rookie award and her first CFR qualification that same year and has qualified for the CFR every year since. Olafson and her 15 year old gelding, Alive N Smashing (aka Duke), will jump into the top ten in both the Canadian and SMS Equipment Pro Tour standings courtesy of a speedy 16.39 second run and \$4206 first place cheque at Lea Park Rodeo (Pro Tour stop) and an additional \$1573 for fourth place at Newell Pro Rodeo in Brooks, AB to total an impressive \$5779.

“Duke has been working so hard everywhere we go,” Olafson says. “And he loves that [Lea Park] arena.” As does his owner, who notes that the big patterns at most of the the Tour Rodeos are part of the appeal for her and Duke. “You go with what your horse likes.”

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The Hudson Bay, Sask. talent – and, yes, travelling down the Canadian pro rodeo road from that address adds a few challenges – doesn't let the miles deter her. "I usually travel alone with three horses," she explains. "But the rodeo community is amazing in offering a place to stay if I need it. I often stop at Melissa and Steve Thiessen's. My horses jump off the trailer and feel right at home." Olafson's goals definitely include another CFR qualification. Looks like she's off to a strong start.

BC steer wrestler Stephen Culling has made no bones about the fact that his 2023 goal is a December trip to Las Vegas and the National Finals Rodeo. The #13 man in the world standings took another step toward making that goal a reality with a very productive Canadian weekend. The #2 ranked bulldogger in the 2023 CPRA standings cashed the first-place cheque at Lea Park with a 3.4 second run for \$2419, then was fifth at Bonnyville and split 4/5 at Brooks for a \$4155 total weekend haul, money that will make a difference in the standings, both north and south.

A new name on Canadian rodeo day sheets is no stranger to success on the biggest rodeo stages. NFR breakaway roper, Shelby Boisjoli, made her return to Canada [she grew up in a roping family near Langdon, AB] an impactful one as she topped the field at Brooks with a 2.4 second run for \$1383, was part of a three – way split at Rocky Mountain House – 2.3 seconds, \$1801 – and added a 4/5/6 split at Lea Park for another \$1017 for an impressive \$4201 cash injection. The newlywed cowgirl who recently tied the knot with 2019 World Champion tie down roper, Haven Meged, will see her name in the top 12 when the next set of Canadian standings is released.

And a brotherly rivalry continued as reigning Canadian Champion team ropers Dawson and Dillon Graham struck twice—a 4.5 second win at Rocky Mountain House for \$1713 each and a 1/2 split at Bonnyville, and a 4.2 for an additional \$1515. Not to be outdone, the other dominant brother combination, Kagen and Tate Schmidt held onto their season lead with a win of their own, riding off with the crown at Lea Park with a 4.1 second run and \$2783 each.

Next up on the CPRA schedule is Gunnar's Bronc Battle in Gleichen, AB June 14, Stavely Pro Rodeo June 15-17, the Daines Ranch Rodeo June 16-18 and Wildwood Bronc Bustin' June 17.

See complete unofficial weekend results at rodeocanada.com

The Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA) with headquarters in Airdrie, Alta. is the official sanctioning body for Professional Rodeo in Canada. The CPRA approves 55 + events annually with a total payout exceeding \$6 million. The organization oversees the SMS Equipment Pro Tour Finale each fall in Armstrong, BC, holds their premiere event—the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR)—at Westerner Park in Red Deer, Alta. in early November and endorses the Maple Leaf Circuit Finals as part of Canadian Western Agribition in Regina, Sask.

For details, please see RodeoCanada.com

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