

2014 PRCA Permit Holder of the Year Challenge crowns champions

LAS VEGAS – Dec. 4, 2014—Competing in an event designed specifically for the rising stars of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) was an experience that 25 cowboys will never forget.

Those contestants were the qualifiers for the 2014 PRCA Permit Holder of the Year Challenge. Before PRCA contestants earn their cards, they hold a permit. The top five of those based on money won in bareback riding, steer wrestling, saddle bronc riding, team roping, tie-down roping and bull riding all had their own finals.

The rodeo was held at the South Point Equestrian Center on Thursday, Dec. 4. Livestock from Benny Binions World Famous Bucking Horse and Bull Sale was used in bareback, saddle bronc and bull riding. The animals will be sold on Saturday and the rodeo gave prospective buyers an opportunity to see them in action.

This is the sixth year for the Permit Holder Challenge but the first year that it has featured timed events. That was a good thing for Noah Lassa from Merrill, Wis., who dominated the steer wrestling. Each of the five contestants competed twice and Lassa won every category. He was the big winner of the day taking home over \$1,000. Lassa had times of 4.7 and 4.1 giving him a total of 8.8. He beat Jace Melvin from Fort Pierre, S.D., by over one-second.

“I was excited when I found out they were having timed events here,” Lassa said. “That made me get to more rodeos and win more money so I could qualify.”

Lassa was the 2011 National High School Rodeo Champion in steer wrestling. He is now a student at Iowa Central Community College in Fort Dodge. He rode a horse owned by Tyler Pearson who qualified for the 2013 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo (WNFR).

“I’d never seen that horse before, but he was great,” Lassa added. “I’m pretty confident after today and it makes me want to keep going and get to some big rodeos.”

No one was happier with their challenge win than Tyler Taylor in the bull riding. The Stephenville, Texas, resident bucked off in the first round, then came back and scored 84 points in the second round to have the high-marked ride of the day and win the championship and \$753. His buddy Reid Barker from Comfort, Texas, qualified for his first WNFR this year and was on hand to help Taylor.

“This was awesome,” Taylor said. “It really opens up your eyes and gets you ready for the next step. It gives permit guys more to shoot for. It was kind of a mini finals and then you see all these NFR guys here watching and helping. It was a great experience.”

The saddle bronc riding was part of the riding Wright family, but this title went to the next generation. Rusty Wright, the oldest son of 2-time world champion and 2014 WNFR qualifier Cody Wright had a total of 157 points on two horses to earn the championship and \$800. His father was right behind the chutes the whole time.

Oregon has had many top bareback riders and they sent one of their rising stars here as well. Wyatt Bloom, from Bend has had help in his career from Bobby Mote, Austin Foss and Steven Peebles who are all competing at this year’s

WNFR. That paid off as he won the championship with 160 points on two head. It also added \$847 to the Montana State University student's checking account.

In the team roping, a new partnership and new friendship was formed when Tucker Dale, from Timber Lake, S.D., and Dustin Searcy from Mooreland, Okla., were put together. They had the fastest time of the rodeo in round two at 5.2 and each earned over \$800. After their success here, they are hoping to get to rope together again.

"This was pretty cool," Searcy said. "It means a lot that the PRCA would add timed events here. It's kind of our NFR."

Dale agreed and added, "It was a chance for all of us to be showcased. I'm really glad we had this opportunity."

The tie-down roping saw a Wyoming cowboy rise to the top. Cole Robinson from Moorecroft, Wyo., had times of 9.9 and 8.7 to win second in both rounds and first overall with a total time of 18.6. That was worth \$968.

"I hope this event just keeps growing," Robinson said. "Everybody I talked to really liked it. It was a bigger event for us permit holders and gave all of us a chance to know what it's like to qualify and compete in a finals."

The event was made possible with support from the following sponsors: RAM Rodeo; San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo; Davie Pro Rodeo; Tucson Rodeo; Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo; Association of Rodeo Committees; Brighton Field Day Festival and Rodeo; National Western Stock Show; Barstow Rodeo; Wrangler; Resistol; South Point Hotel, Casino and Spa; Cactus Ropes; Justin Brands and the Justin Sportsmedicine Team.

Nearly 3,000 fans were on hand to watch the contestants and the animal athletes. All of the proceeds from the event will benefit the ProRodeo Hall of Fame in Colorado Springs.

2014 PRCA Permit Holder of the Year Challenge Champions

Bareback Riding – Wyatt Bloom, Bend, Ore.

Steer Wrestling – Noah Lassa, Merrill, Wis.

Team Roping – Tucker Dale, Timber Lake, S.D. & Dustin Searcy, Mooreland, Okla.

Saddle Bronc Riding – Rusty Wright, Milford, Utah

Tie-Down Roping – Cole Robinson, Moorecroft, Wyo.

Bull Riding – Tyler Taylor, Stephenville, Texas

LAS VEGAS – Dec. 4, 2014—The following are results from the 2014 PRCA Permit Holder of the Year Challenge held at the South Point Equestrian Center.

Bareback Riding: (first round) 1, Wyatt Denny, Minden, Nev., 83 points, \$377. 2, Wyatt Clark, Wellfleet, Neb., 78, \$282. 3, Wyatt Bloom, Bend, Ore., 77, \$188. 4, (tie) Cole Picton, Marshall, Mo., and Tanner Phipps, Dalton, Ga., 69, \$47. (second round) 1, Tanner Phipps, Dalton, Ga., 86, \$377. 2, Wyatt Bloom, Bend, Ore., 83, \$282. 3, Wyatt Denny, Minden, Nev., 69, \$188. 4, Wyatt Clark, Wellfleet, Neb., 66, \$94. (overall – total on two) 1, Bloom, 160, \$377. 2, Phipps, 155, \$282. 3, Denny, 152, \$188. 4, Clark, 144, \$94.

Steer Wrestling: (first round, three times) 1, (tie) Noah Lassa, Merrill, Wis., and Jace Melvin, Fort Pierre, S.D., 4.7, \$330 each. 3, J.D. Struxness, Appleton, Minn., 6.8, \$188. (second round) 2, Noah Lassa, Merrill, Wis., 4.1, \$377. 2, Tyler Gibson, Huntsville, Texas, 4.8, \$282. 3, Jace Melvin, Fort Pierre, S.D., 5.2, \$188. 4, J.D. Struxness, Appleton, Minn., 13.6, \$94. (overall—total on two) 1, Noah Lassa, Merrill, Wis., 8.8, \$377. 2, Jace Melvin, 9.9, \$282. 3, Struxness, 20.5, \$188. (on one) 4, Gibson, 4.6, \$94.

Team Roping: (first round, one time) 1, Aaron Macy , Post, Texs, and McCoy Profili, Anderson, Texas, 5.5, \$323. (second round – two times) 1, Tucker Dale, Timber Lake, S.D., and Dustin Searcy, Mooreland, Okla., 5.2, \$323. 2, Shawn Bird, Cut Bank, Mont., and Levi Lord, Sturgis, S.D., 14.7, \$242. (overall) 1, Dale and Searcy, 5.2, \$484. 2, Macy and Profili, 5.5, \$383. 3, Bird and Lord, 14.7, \$242.

Saddle Bronc Riding: (first round, three rides) 1, Rusty Wright, Milford, Utah, 81, \$377. 2, Dalton Davis, Holcomb, Kan., 71, \$282. 3, Zeke Thurston, Big Valley, Alberta, 188. (second round) 1, CoBurn Bradshaw, Beaver, Utah, 83, \$377. 2, Dalton Davis, Holcomb, Kan., 81, \$282. 3, Nat Stratton, Goodwell, kla., 76, \$188. 4, (tie) Zeke Thruston, Big Valley, Alberta and Rusty Wrigt, Milford, Utah, 76, \$47. (overall -- total on two) 1, Wright, 157, \$377. 2, Davis, 152, \$282. 3, Thurston, 140, \$188. (on one) 4, Bradshaw, 83, \$94.

Tie Down Roping: (first round) 1, Ike Fontenot, Ville Platte, La., 9.7 seconds, \$323. 2, Cole Robinson, Moorecroft, Wyo., 9.9, \$242. 3, Dillon Holder, Durant, Okla., 11.3, \$151. 4, L.D. Meier, Texhoma, Okla., 12.3, \$81. (second round) 1, Dillon Holder, Durant, Okla., 8.1, \$323. 2, Cole Robinson, Moorcroft, Wyo., 8.7, \$242. 3, Ike Fontenot, Ville Platte, La., 151. (overall – total on two) 1, Robinson, 18.6, \$484. 2, Holder, 19.4, \$363. 3, Fontenot, 21.9, \$242. 4, Meier, 12.3, \$121.

Bull Riding: (first round – two rides) 1, Denton Fugate, Dixon, Mo., 76, \$377. 2, Roscoe Jarboa, New Plymouth, Idaho, 73, \$282. (second round 00 three rides) 1, Tyler Taylor, Stephenville, Texas, 84, \$377. 2, Eligah Mora, Wiggins, Colo., 79, \$282. 3, Chase Robbins, Marsing, Idaho, 78, \$188. (overall) 1, Taylor, 84, \$377. 2, Mora, 79, \$282. 3, Robbins, 78, \$188. 4, Fugate, 76, \$94.