



Thurston and Get Smart Live Up to the Hype

It was the night of the full moon. And weird stuff happened.

Some strange trips. A couple of re-rides. Steers that wouldn't take the fall. And some Canadians that were apparent victims of the lunar forces.

But one matchup that was not impacted by the strangeness of the night was the one that pitted a Canadian and World Champion cowboy against a Canadian and World Champion bucking horse. Reigning Canadian and 2016 World titleist Zeke Thurston met up with an old friend in Northcott-Macza's Get Smart, the 2019 winner of Best Bronc titles on both sides of the 49th parallel. It was the dream matchup and the dream came true as the 92.5 score was just a half point off the arena record. The \$26,230 first place cheque kept the second generation talent in fourth place in the very lucrative average and extended his overall lead to \$16,000 over season leader Ryder Wright who was second in the round with 88.5 points. It was Wright's best showing in what has been a tough week for the Utah man as he is in a 10/11 split in the average.

"I don't even know how much money I've won on Get Smart but it's a bunch," Thurston said of the 17 year-old rock star gelding. "I've never been on another horse like him. He's tiny, maybe 800 pounds, but he's strong and he's proud and things gotta go right for you to ride him but when they do you can win big."

It was the third go-round win in a row for Canadian bronc riders and fourth in the seven rounds. Thurston has two of those first place finishes.

Bareback rider Orin Larsen had to get on two horses on this night and combined with Big Stone Rodeo's Mayhem for a 90 point ride that moved the Manitoban all the way to 4th place in the average. He remains in second place in the world standings. Californian Clayton Biglow mastered a spinner, Rafter G Rodeo's Ankle Biter, to the tune of 91.5 points to extend his lead atop the season standings leaderboard. It was Biglow's third 90 plus point ride of the seven rounds to date as he sits first in the average and leads the second place Larsen by \$60,000 in the battle for world supremacy.

In a bull riding go-round that saw 12 of the 15 bull riders make premature departures from the backs of bovines, Sage Kimzey went about the business of being Sage Kimzey. The five time World Champion inched closer to another title as he bested Cervi Championship Rodeo's Smoke Wagon for 90 points and the win. The first place \$33,000 cheque (including ground money) gives the Strong City, Oklahoma superstar \$363,000 and a virtually insurmountable lead in his pursuit of that sixth gold buckle. He also leads the average as he has ridden six of seven bulls at the Thomas and Mack Arena.

2016 Canadian Champion, Jordan Hansen, bucked off his third in a row as he fell victim to Andrews Rodeo's Velocity. The Ponoka cowboy still has amassed over \$30,000 in earnings so far at this 61st WNFR.

Despite finishing just out of the money with a 4.2 second run, Louisiana bulldogger Tyler Waguespack maintained his hold on both the World and Average leads. The two time and defending World Champion has \$177,925 in overall earnings, just \$3500 ahead of Ty Erickson, his closest adversary. Erickson, however, sits eighth in the average. Two time Canadian Champion, Scott Guenther, had a challenging steer with the result, an 11.8 on the scoreboard clock, dropping the Provost, Alberta cowboy to seventh in the World and eleventh in the average.

On a night with quite a range of money-making tie-down roping runs, Tyler Milligan, Pahaska, Oklahoma, earned the win with a 7.5 second run. Still on top of the World Standings is reigning Canadian Champion, Shane Hanchey (\$209,927) though the Sulphur, Louisiana roper was forced to go to a second rope after missing his first throw, which kept him ninth in the average (one hole out of the lucrative average payout). Rookie roping sensation, Haven Meged, Miles City, Montana, is still number one in the average with four time World Champion, Tuf Cooper right behind.

Defending World Champion Hailey Kinsel-Lockwood posted a shiney 13.60 second run for her fifth cheque of the Finals and her first round win at this year's WNFR. The injection of \$26,230 helped the Co-tulla, Texas cowgirl maintain her first place position in the World Standings with \$253,212 in overall earnings. Third place cowgirl Emily Miller ran a clean 13.94 to finish out of the money but stayed second in the average. 2017 World Champion, Nellie Miller kept the pressure on by clocking 13.79 - good for a share of 3-4 in the round. The Cottonwood, California barrel racer remains in a strong position, fourth in the World and fourth in the all-important average.

Team ropers, header Cody Snow of Los Olivos, California and heeling partner, Wesley Thorp of Throckmorton, Texas were a blazing 3.6 seconds to win the seventh round. Canadian Champions Matt Sherwood and Hunter Koch picked up a fifth place cheque, their fourth payday of the week, with a 7.5 second run to stay in second place in the average though they are well off the pace in the overall title chase. Clay Smith of Broken Bow, Oklahoma and Jade Corkill of Fallon, Nevada continue to lead the world standings with three rounds remaining.

For complete WNFR results, see www.prorodeo.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 55 events annually with a total payout exceeding \$5.7 million. The organization holds their premiere event - the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) - at Westerner Park in Red Deer, AB, November 3-8, 2020 and will oversee the Finning Pro Tour Finals September 6 in Armstrong, BC and the Maple Leaf Circuit Finals December 2-5 at 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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