



## **CANADIAN PROFESSIONAL RODEO ASSOCIATION**

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For immediate release

### **Second Maple Leaf Circuit Finals Wraps Up at Agribition**

The Maple Leaf Circuit Finals, an integral part of Regina, Sask's Canadian Western Agribition which celebrated 50 years November 23-27, simultaneously brought the 2021 rodeo calendar year to a close and kicked off the 2022 Canadian Professional Rodeo season.

For bull rider Griffin Smeltzer, the four-day event was a welcome finale to an up and down season. The 21 year old who had elbow surgery in late October just nine days before the CFR, rode three of his four bulls garnering a go-round win on day three and a ½ split on Saturday's final round en route to a circuit season total of \$13,115 and the Maple Leaf Circuit Championship.

"I knew I had a good shot on the bull I'd drawn and I was really happy with the way it turned out," Smeltzer commented after his 86 point ride on Cody Strandquist's 410 Western Wine.

"The bull riders rode exceptional as you'd expect at a Finals. The crowd was loud and having fun... and they really pumped us up. It was an awesome event; the stock contractors and committee did a great job and all of us really appreciate having a Circuit and a Circuit Finals here in Canada."

Smeltzer will be heading south to compete at both PRCA events and PBRs in the U.S. right away. The second generation Claresholm, Alta. cowboy went on to say, "This win showed me I have the ability to succeed but to tell the truth, bull riding is secondary. I'm just really happy with the direction my life is going right now."

Newly crowned Canadian Bull Riding Champion, Jared Parsonage (Maple Creek, Sask.), continued to have the hot hand - following up the Canadian title he won three weeks ago at CFR in Red Deer - with a four-for-four performance in Regina to add the Maple Leaf Circuit Finals crown to his growing resume.

Two Agribition competitors emerged as both Maple Leaf Circuit Finals and Season Champions. Carbon, Alta's Cole Goodine laid claim to both titles in the Bareback Riding, capturing the aggregate honours in Regina and maintaining his comfortable lead in the MLC season standings of \$15,101, tops among Maple Leaf Circuit winners. 2021 Canadian Breakaway Roping Champion, Kendal Pierson from Wardlow, Alta., is the second competitor who earned both titles in Regina. Pierson was successful in three of the four rounds on her way to the dual wins - earning \$8366 over the course of the season. Breakaway Roping burst on the scene this year as an official optional CPRA event. Top ropers competed at both the Canadian Finals Rodeo and Agribition Rodeo for the first time in history.

Additional winners at the 2021 Circuit Finals included two sets of brothers in the Team Roping event. Ponoka's Logan and Keely Bonnett were one of three teams to rope all four of their stock to capture the aggregate award while Wainwright, Alta.'s Dawson and Dillon Graham maintained

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their spot on top of the leaderboard to earn the season championship with \$12,848 each.

Second generation cowboy Kole Ashbacher, took home the Finals saddle bronc buckle with two wins, a second and a fourth to round out a year that included runner-up honours at the CFR while CPRA rookie Lucas Macza (High River, Alta.) capped off an outstanding 2021 season with the Maple Leaf Circuit Saddle Bronc title and \$10,204 in season earnings.

In the tie-down roping, Glentworth, Sask. hand, Jesse Popescul, put together a consistent four runs to win the aggregate and 2017 Canadian Champion Logan Bird emerged as the Maple Leaf Circuit Champion for 2021 with \$12,343 overall.

Ladies Barrel Racing saw Texas native, Shelby Spielman (now residing in Ponoka) turn in four consistent runs, a first, a second and two thirds, to pick up the Finals win. 2021 Canadian Champion, Justine Elliott added to her outstanding season; the Lacombe, Alta. cowgirl held onto top spot with \$13,191 in total winnings.

And in the Steer Wrestling, Fort St John, B.C.'s Stephen Culling bulldogged four head in 18.4 seconds to be the aggregate winner while Matt Richardson held onto his season lead, finishing with \$10,196.

The Maple Leaf Circuit Champion and Circuit Season Leader in each event qualify for the NFR Open (formerly RAM National Circuit Finals Rodeo) slated for July 13-16 at Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo in Colorado Springs, CO. Two contestants in each event from each of the 12 U.S. circuits, plus Canada are eligible for the five-round event.

For complete unofficial results, go to [rodeocanada.com](http://rodeocanada.com). Look for updated official results and Canadian standings later this week.

**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](http://RodeoCanada.com).

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