

Pro Rodeo Canada



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Professional rodeo paid out more than \$375,000 in prize money at three Alberta venues this past weekend.

Yet, it didn't have all that much of an impact on the Canadian standings. There were only two lead changes, both by reigning Canadian champions reasserting their power.

Dusty LaValley overtook his traveling partner Jake Vold in the bareback riding rankings and Chad Besplug knocked youngster Garrett Green off his perch in the bull riding. And, neither had to win a whole lot of money to do it. LaValley picked up a little over \$2,400 at Wainwright and Sundre, while Besplug collected \$3,100 for winning first at Wainwright.

The third rodeo was at Sundre, where the tie-down ropers were high on speed.

Oklahoman Hunter Herrin set the pace with an arena record 6.6 second run, four ticks short of the world record set at Strathmore in 2005. Not only that, the rodeo paid 10 places and last hole was split with a pair of 7.7s that paid only \$147.

In addition, Montanan Travis Tryan and his Kansas heeler Jake Long set an arena record in the team roping with a time of 3.5 seconds. That's one tick off the Canadian record set in the Wrangler Tour finals at Calgary in 2009.

Tryan and Long did bunch of damage across the map, also winning High River and placing at Wainwright for a total of \$5,700 and change apiece.

The weekend's top gun was, who else, Lee Ann Rust, the popular and friendly barrel racer from Texas. She again cashed at all three rodeos, running her streak to 12 straight. In all, the weekend was worth two bucks short of \$6,800 and she's the first contestant in any event to surpass \$20,000 in earnings. The actual figure is \$20,929.

That's well above what it took to qualify for last November's Canadian championships. All she has to do is get in her minimum 15 rodeo count and she'll do that during the upcoming Canada Day long weekend. Rust is entered at Ponoka, Airdrie and Williams Lake, B.C., and that will fulfill her count. But, for the heckuva it, the Calgary Stampede invitee will also take a run up the road to compete at Benalto on July 6.

Once the Stampede ends, she's going back across the line to enter all the big American rodeos. "I want to qualify for the (December) National Final Rodeo at Las Vegas," she said, "and as long as there's a glimmer of hope, I'm going to keep trying."

Texas tie-down roper Clif Cooper, making his first ever trip to Wainwright, was the weekend's second high money winner with \$5,903. Then came Tryan and Long.

Luke Butterfield, who plays his hometown rodeo this coming weekend at Ponoka, was the top Canadian gun. He finished second in the aggregate and Wainwright and tied for third at High River for a total of \$5,415. It carried him from 10th to fourth in the standings.

There were some other big movers: Ty Taypotat jumped from 14th in fourth in the bareback riding after winning Wainwright outright for \$4,952; Montana's Beau Hill went from ninth to third in the rankings with a \$4,663 weekend. Utah's Olin Hannum was the tower of strength in the bulldogging, earning \$5,246 at Wainwright. Another big move was made by California team ropers Spencer Mitchell and Broc Cresta. They rocketed from ninth to second in the rankings with total income of \$6,421 apiece.

The richest weekend in Canadian pro rodeo is coming up with a total of nearly \$700,000 on the line at Ponoka, Airdrie and Williams Lake. It could turn the standings upside down.

For more information,
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