

Pro Rodeo Canada



Canadian Professional Rodeo Association . 272245 R.R. 2 Airdrie, Alberta Canada T4A 2L5
Phone (403) 945-0903 . Fax (403) 945-0936 . Email cpra@rodeocanada.com

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Aug 27, 2014
For immediate release

Baldwin Shines at Critical Lethbridge Rodeo Stop

When it comes to trying to qualify for the Canadian Finals Rodeo, Idaho tie-down roper, Nate Baldwin not only needs to finish inside the top 12 of the Canadian standings, he also needs to beat out a handful of his fellow American contenders.

"It's real competitive this year," agrees Baldwin, when describing the battle for the maximum five non-Canadian spots at the CFR. "So in my position, Lethbridge was really important."

A 7.6-second run at the Whoop Up Days Rodeo in Lethbridge, AB, was good enough to win the top cheque worth \$1,904. That bumps Baldwin's 2014 CPRA earnings to \$15,744, enough to unofficially move the 40 year-old to 5th in the Canadian standings and, perhaps more importantly, to 2nd among the American ropers vying for the five CFR spots.

"When we started pulling in, we could see the rain coming," says Baldwin, who competed in the slack performance on August 20th. "When we started loading my horse, the rain started coming down. As I drove home, I looked at the weather report and could see the guys at the end of the week were going to be at a disadvantage.

"I really like that rodeo. They add lots of money. It's always a rodeo I get excited for and I'm glad I can have success at it."

With the win, his second consecutive Lethbridge title, Baldwin not only greatly improves his chances of a 4th CFR appearance, he's also put himself in a solid position for a spot at the inaugural Cinch Grassroots Pro Rodeo Finals in Calgary in early October.

"This is my fifth or sixth year of coming up to Canada," offers the two-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualifier. "But this is really the first year I've made the CFR my primary goal. As I get older, and I've got three kids now, I'm slowing down so instead of the NFR, the CFR is more practical for me.

"I've spent more time in Canada than ever before beginning with the spring rodeos. We've got a motorhome now so they've (wife, Meggan and three boys, aged 5, 3 and 2) been able to come with me. It's been a great experience."

While Morgan, Utah bareback rider, Caleb Bennett doesn't have the worry of a full compliment of non-Canadians in the hunt for CFR spots in his event, he does have concerns about finishing inside the top 12. Going into the Lethbridge stop, Bennett sat in the crying hole, 13th in the CPRA standings. But an 88.5-point ride on Kesler's *Street Dance* was good enough for a split of top money with season leader, Jake Vold of Ponoka, AB, and a \$1,726 payday. A 3rd place cheque for Bennett's

traveling partner, J.R. Vezain, however, only means a move up one spot in the standings for the 25 year-old Bennett. Vezain, meantime, unofficially jumps to 11th.

While Baldwin's weather prognostications proved prophetic as only two tie-down ropers from the final two performances finished in the money, the rain was no match for the burly bulldoggers. Five of the eleven money winners in the steer wrestling came from Saturday night. The fastest time was posted by Straws Milan of Cochrane, AB, who twisted his steer in 3.4-seconds despite the swampy conditions.

Other winners from Lethbridge included team ropers, Todd Gallais and Grady Branden (\$1,432 each); barrel racer, Shannon Northcott (\$1,895); bullrider, Jordan Hansen (\$1,924); saddle bronc riders, Cole Elshere and Luke Butterfield (\$2,016 each); novice saddle bronc rider, Keenan Reinhardt (\$241); novice bareback rider, Buck Moen (\$256) and steer rider, Nick Tetz (\$359).

Next up on the Pro Rodeo Canada schedule is the final stop on the Wrangler Canadian Pro Rodeo Tour in Armstrong, BC (Aug. 27-30), the Wrangler Canadian Pro Rodeo Tour Shootout in Armstrong, BC (Aug. 31), the Okotoks Pro Rodeo in Okotoks, AB (Aug. 29-31) and the Nicola Valley Pro Rodeo in Merritt, BC (Aug. 30-31).

About the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association: The Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA) with it's headquarters in Airdrie, Alberta, is the sanctioning body for professional rodeo in Canada. The CPRA sanctions over 50 events annually with a total payout exceeding \$5.1 million. Join us for the 41st edition of the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) November 5th to 9th, 2014 in Edmonton, Alberta at Rexall Place, our association's premiere event. For more information please visit RodeoCanada.com or call (403) 945-0903. Follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com), or like our page on [Facebook](https://facebook.com), and watch the action on [YouTube](https://youtube.com) throughout the year.