



Canada Night - Half a Million and Counting

The Canadian contingent went into their night at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo needing just \$38,000 to top the half million dollar mark in take home pay from the ten million dollar event, easily surpassing the best previous Canadian performance.

And Orin Larsen wasted no time in getting 'Team Canada' closer to that milestone payoff as he made his best ride of the 2016 WNFR with an 87.5 score on Frontier Rodeo's Full Baggage to win his first ever go-round and the \$26,000 plus first place cheque. The talented Manitoba cowboy has fashioned an inspirational story as he re-injured a painful rib tear in the opening round but has refused to give in. And over the last three days, Larsen has placed in all three rounds to win almost fifty thousand dollars.

"Full Baggage - he's a big, strong horse that I've always wanted to get on and there's no better place to do that than right here," Larsen noted with a smile. "That trip to the South Point (nightly go-round buckle presentations) is something I've wanted to do since I was a little kid - that's going to be an emotional roller coaster for sure."

Referencing the pain that has been an unpleasant accompaniment to every one of his rides at the Finals, the two time WNFR qualifier was philosophical. "It's not too bad during the ride other than the popping and crunching that's happening. But after the ride, that's when I can feel it. But tonight I won so I feel pretty good."

Airdrie's Jake Vold who won three rounds in a row earlier at this Finals, had some trouble with the Pickett Rodeo bareback horse, Top Notch and had to settle for just 70.5 points.

Canadian bareback horses had a big night as C5 Rodeo's Virgil packed Winn Ratliff to 86.5 and second place while Big Stone Rodeo's Call Me Kindra carried JR Vezain to an 85 point 3/4 split.

For the third night in a row all three Canadian saddle bronc riders were in the money. The 'kids' (the oldest is 23) were led by Nanton's Clay Elliott who rode Burch Rodeo's Lunatic Fringe to an 86 point second place finish and a \$20,730 dollar payday. Big Valley cowboy Zeke Thurston spurred out an 85 point effort on Pete Carr Rodeo's Manhattan Moon for third place money of \$15,653 and the guy who has been Mr. Consistency through the first eight days in Las Vegas - Jake Watson of Hudson's Hope, BC - made it eight for eight with an 82 point ride on JK Rodeo's Dakota Babe for 6th place and \$4230.

Watson sits in top spot in the average and Thurston who has bucked off only one horse (at 7.92 seconds) is right behind Watson in the average with just two go-rounds remaining.

Two time World Champion, Cody Wright turned back the clock on this night and rode like his two sons Rusty and Ryder who are among the five Wrights qualified for Las Vegas in 2016. The elder statesman of the family was a brilliant 88 points on Lipstick and Whiskey from Powder River Rodeo, a horse that eighteen year-old Ryder rode to a go round win earlier in the week.

The lone disappointment for the dedicated Canadian fans, who had the flags waving with attitude tonight, came in the team roping as Levi Simpson (Ponoka) and Jeremy Buhler (Arrowwood) took their first no time of the rodeo and fell to third place in the average. Barrhead's Kolton Schmidt went after it but broke the barrier to take him and Texas partner Shay Carroll to a 13.9 with the ten second penalty.

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The 2016 Canadian champion team of Dustin Bird from Cutbank, Montana and Russell Cardoza from Terrebonne, Oregon were picture perfect in making the fastest run of the week, a sensational 3.7 seconds to win the round and keep Bird in the #1 spot in the All-Around standings.

Terrell, Texas bulldogger Clayton Hass won the round in his event with a 4.1 second run and remains in contention for both the steer wrestling and all-around titles. And in the barrel race, Oregon cowgirl, Amberleigh Moore, equaled the arena record with her 13.37 to win the round while former champion, Mary Burger, at 68 years young finished third in the round with a 13.66 to inch closer to her second world title.

Three Canadian champions finished atop the tie down roping leaderboard for the eighth go-round. Sulphur, Louisiana's Shane Hanchey topped the round with a 6.8 second run; Blackfoot Idaho's Matt Shiozawa (the reigning Canadian Champ) was second at 7.1 and the new dad from the state of Washington, Tyson Durfey, finished up in third spot with a 7.3.

It was fitting that in the Canada Night finale, it was a Canadian bull, Wayne Vold Rodeo's Cooper's Comet, that carried Fruita, Colorado cowboy, Tyler Smith, to an 89 point win in a round that saw only two men able to ride. In two trips at the 2016 WNFR, Cooper's Comet, the 2016 Canadian Bull of the Year, has been 88.5 and 89 points and his riders, Smith and Roscoe Jarboe have both won the rounds.

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 over 50 events annually with a total payout exceeding \$5.1 million. Join us for our premiere event - the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) - in early November each year in Edmonton, Alberta at Northlands Coliseum. Follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat at @prorodeocanada, like Canadian Professional Rodeo Association on Facebook, or online at RodeoCanada.com.

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