

## Champions Crowned at #CFR43



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It was a story that will be told and retold for a long time.

It's the story of a twenty-three year-old bull riding sensation whose season came to a crushing halt in Cheyenne, Wyoming—a bull ride that ended in a shattered ankle left in nine pieces with three plates and ten screws holding it together and doctors saying his season was over.

But Jordan Hansen had other ideas. He not only came back for the 43rd edition of the Canadian Finals Rodeo but when the Northlands Coliseum smoke cleared and the dust settled, Hansen had defied the odds and was the Canadian Bull Riding Champion.

“I kind of like to prove those doctors wrong,” the likable Calgary cowboy chuckled. “This is what we ride for all year and once the cast was off and the surgeon said I could start training a little bit, I knew I'd be here. I only got on a couple of practice bulls and it wasn't feeling that great coming here but the Sport Medicine Team taped me up really well and I didn't feel it during any of my rides this week.”

Hansen bucked off his first bull in Wednesday night's first performance and noticeably hobbled as he ran back to the chutes. Then came Thursday and his first successful bull ride in in four months—an 85.5 point ride to finish third in the round.

“That was the one that really gave me the confidence that I still knew how to ride bulls,” Hansen affirmed.

It was the first of five rides in row and when he rode his final bull of the week on Sunday afternoon—Vold's Black Rose for 85.50 for another third place cheque—Hansen had won the average and made the long climb to the top of the mountain... earning \$78,185 for his abbreviated season and a slender \$7,000 margin over second place man and two time champion—Dakota Buttar.

When asked about goals after winning his first Canadian title, Hansen laughed. “Well, there's always room for two. I feel really fortunate to be able to come back after the injury. I just want to heal up a little bit more and see what happens this winter. And I've always wanted to get to the NFR so I'll try to stay healthy all year and that's my next goal.”

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“I want to be among the greats.”

Jake Vold was thinking about names like LaValley, Dunham, Dunn, Trottier, Shields, Boyd and Cholach, some of the greatest bareback riders of all time.

“Those guys all won at least three titles so this third one means a lot to me.” Vold shared after winning his third consecutive Canadian bareback riding championship. And he did it with authority, putting an exclamation point on his CFR week with a spectacular 87.5 point ride on the Calgary Stampede mare, Reckless Margie.

“She's a phenomenal mare,” Vold smiled. “I'd never had her before and to be honest I think I could do better on her next time but I was pretty happy when I got the call last night telling me I had that horse. And she was super today.”

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The final go round win, coupled with securing the average, took the Airdrie (via Ponoka) cowboy to a season earnings total of \$91,467 and an \$18,000 cushion over the second place man, Tremonton, Utah's, Caleb Bennett.

Vold also claimed the Top Gun award that goes to the competitor who earns the most money over the five days and six performances of the CFR. And there's more to come. The twenty-nine year-old will be part of the Canadian contingent—eight strong—who will be heading south to Las Vegas to compete at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in December.

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For Cody Cassidy the sentiment was something similar after the Donalda cowboy clinched his second title in a row and his fifth overall. “

“One of the Butterfields won six of them, I think,” Cassidy acknowledged. “And I'd like to win seven or eight before I'm done.”

This one might have been a little easier than some. “I think I might have won it even if I missed that last steer,” Cassidy commented, “but there's a lot of money up and that's why we come here—money and championships, so I still wanted to do it right.”

Cassidy's 4.3 second run was good for third in the round and carried him to the average title as well. His winning total was \$79,371 providing him with a \$23,000 margin of victory over his older brother, Curtis.

Cassidy credited both the horse he rode to the title, Dustin Walker's Tank and his hazer, “Mountain Man” Josh Harden.

“Tank probably wouldn't work for everybody but he fits me perfectly,” Cassidy smiled. “And it always feels good when you don't have to think about your hazer. Josh is just such a good hand and I'm really confident when I know he's over there.”

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It's not often that a rookie qualifier jumps out and wins a Canadian title, especially when riding against a field of veterans with a bunch of championships to their credit. But for Nanton, Alberta bronc rider, Clay Elliott, there was never any doubt that he had a chance to win it.

“I don't think about the stats or anything really but the horses,” the twenty-two year-old confided. “I knew if I rode like I can, I'd have a chance.”

And when it came down to Sunday, that chance became a reality. Elliott rode three time Saddle Bronc of the Year, Lunatic Party from Outlaw Buckers, for 85 points and second in the championship round to take his season total to \$70,685, giving him a \$19,000 margin of victory over the eight time CFR qualifier Jim Berry.

“I knew I had one of the best horses in the pen,” Elliott said, moments after the ride. “To stay on a bucking son of a gun like that—it's pretty special.”

Elliott had to regroup after being bucked off in the Saturday evening round. “In rodeo it's all about short term memory. I give myself ten minutes after a ride like that one last night, then I fix what I need to fix and get back at it.”

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Like Jake Vold, Elliott will be heading for Las Vegas in a few weeks to represent his country at the CFR. “This fuels the fire for sure,” the second generation cowboy smiled. “I can’t wait to get there.”

The twenty-two year National Intercollegiate champion of a year ago had special words for one of his bronc riding heroes. “Next to my family, the guy who is my idol is Winston Bruce. He’s got a world champion’s buckle on his belt and he taught me so much about how to win.”

Of his next challenge, Elliott repeated a mantra he’d followed all week. “I try to focus on only one thing and that’s bucking horses. They stay the same and I know if I let the media and announcers say what needs to be said about me, I can just concentrate on that one thing—those bucking horses. I have the opportunity to go get on ten more—ten one headers in Las Vegas—and I can’t wait.

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One of the closest races was in the tie down roping. The last time a Canadian won the roping championship was in 2009. That man was Al Bouchard. And on Sunday afternoon, Bouchard did all he could to end the drought Canadians have experienced since '09.

But his effort fell just short as the talented and unflappable Matt Shiozawa from Chubbock, Idaho held off the hard-charging Bouchard to claim his second Canadian title, the first coming back in 2014.

Noting that he’d just got the news that he’d officially won it, Shiozawa, said, “It’s kind of a relief. It was so close I didn’t know for sure I’d won it until a few minutes ago.

“But really the best part was that I roped second last and Al roped last and we were giving each other high fives and wishing each other good luck. That’s the camaraderie there is in our sport.”

Shiozawa credited his mare, Alotta with helping him to that second title. “She’s a terrific horse that I rode at my first Finals back in '07. The she hit a bit of a rough patch and we bred her, had a nice colt and when we brought her back she was great again. She’s part of the family.”

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Another great CFR comeback story was fashioned at this finals as Taber, Alberta’s Nancy Csabay won her second straight barrel racing title Csabay who needed a huge performance at the Pro Rodeo Canada Series Final a month ago in Calgary, just to qualify for the CFR, was once again a picture of consistency en route to back to back titles.

Csabay won the third round on Friday night, then added third place cheques in all five of the remaining rounds to top the field in the average and take home the champion’s saddle and buckle once again.

‘It feels wonderful,’ the second generation cowgirl beamed. “It’s something I never, ever expected. Going in to the Pro Series Final in Calgary I was 14th. I was able to move up to 7th there - and then to come here and go from 7th to 1st is amazing.”

Csabay and her mare Wicked have been an electric pairing, especially for the last two seasons.

“That horse of mine is a life changer. I just love her. I’ve learned that I just need to make the same run every time and not worry about the win—just do what I know and let my horse do what she knows.”

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Together Csabay and Wicked won \$42,345 at the CFR to take her season total to \$72,010, providing a slender \$1200 edge over second place finisher, Callahan Crossley, the Hermiston, Oregon cowgirl who struggled in the final round and dropped out of first place for the first time all week.

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And in the team roping it was the new dad from Cut Bank, Montana winning his second title, this time with partner Russell Cardoza who collected his first Canadian championship.

The team formed near the end of 2015. "I needed a partner at the time to help me get to the NFR," Cardoza said, "and I heard Dustin was out there. We teamed up and it worked out. I got to Las Vegas and this year, Dustin really wanted to include the Canadian rodeos in our schedule. That was fine with me. Now I can't wait to get back up here next year."

"I grew up close to the Canadian border," Bird, who won his first Canadian title in 2012, added. "I wanted to win a Canadian championship and after that I was hoping to win it again so this is great."

Luke Butterfield, the Ponoka bronc rider and steer wrestler, claimed his first All Around title, holding off defending champion, Josh Harden for the honours while Morgan Grant maintained his hold in the High Point race to claim his second title, the first coming back in 2013.

On the livestock side of things, it was C5 Rodeo's bareback horse Virgil capturing Best of the CFR honours while in the saddle bronc riding, Wild Cherry from the Calgary Stampede was top horse with Vold's VJV Nailed capturing the Best CFR Bull title.

#### **About the Canadian Professional Rodeo Association**

The Canadian Professional Rodeo Association (CPRA) with headquarters in Airdrie, Alta. 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 43rd edition of the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) November 9-13, 2016 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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