



Scott Guenthner Wins First Ever WNFR Go-Round Buckle

December 15, 2017

Those who follow Canadian rodeo knew it was coming. Scott Guenthner is just too good to have only one cheque (a 3/4/5/6 split) through the first eight rounds of action. That all changed on a cool Las Vegas Friday night as Guenthner heated things up with a blistering 3.3 second run for his first go-round win and a sweet-heart \$26,230 cheque.

"It means a lot," the Provost, Alberta cowboy acknowledged. "I was a little disheartened, that's for sure but I was trying not to think about it. But this whole experience is all so amazing right from the grand entry on and now winning tonight—it sure makes you want to come back."

Guenthner changed horses on Thursday night, going to Tom Lewis' horse, Maverick, the horse traveling partner Milan has been on all week. "I knew I had to change something so I figured I might as well get on a horse they've won three rounds on here already. And he was awesome tonight."

The win means Guenthner joins Milan, the two time Canadian champion, who also had his first-ever (and second) rounds earlier in the week.

Meanwhile disaster struck season leader Ty Erickson from Helena, Montana as he missed the nose on his steer and finally, after chasing the steer on foot around the arena, settled for a 26.8 and fell from 1st to 7th in the average. That opens the door for the second place man, Tyler Pearson from Louisville, Oklahoma who sits just \$25,000 behind the man the bulldoggers have been chasing all year. But Pearson sits second in the all-important average, which will pay more than enough to carry him to the title depending on what happens in the all-important tenth round.

In the team roping, the duo of Jeremy Buhler, reigning world champion heeler, and Arizona's Tom Richards picked up their second cheque of the week, a fifth-place \$6769 payday courtesy of their 4.1 second run. In a speedy round, the duo of Kaleb Driggers and Junior Nogueira set a new arena record of 3.3 seconds and re-claimed the lead in one of the events that will be decided on the final day with several teams too close to rule out of the running. Cory Petska and Erich Rogers are sitting in second place in the average giving them a slight advantage heading into Saturday.

Another interesting race heading into the home stretch is in the tie down roping where three-time champion Tuf Cooper's lead is a tenuous \$23,500 over the Brazilian Marcos Costa who leads the average with Cooper in second spot. The difference between first and second in the average is \$13,000 (\$67,000 to \$54,000), not enough for Costa to overtake the leader. The Brazilian has to place a couple of spots higher in the final go-round and hold onto the average lead to keep Cooper from winning his fourth title.

A similar scenario is shaping up in the barrel racing event where what appeared to be an unassailable lead all season long has now come down to what happens on championship Saturday. Nellie Miller of Cottonwood, California is now within \$44,000 of the Texas cowgirl, Tiani Schuster, who has led from wire to wire. But Miller leads the average and if she can hold that spot and not lose ground to Schuster in the go-round, the seemingly impossible could happen..

In the bull riding Trey Benton III and Boudreux Campbell were the only two to ride on Friday night and they

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split the round with identical 88 point scores as Canada's Jordan Hansen bucked off at 7.4 seconds to snap his riding streak at three. Three time champion Sage Kimzey holds a \$61,000 advantage on Benton III who leads the average and, like Kimzey, has ridden six of his nine bulls to date. They sit first and second respectively in the average.

With Jake Vold sidelined with a knee injury incurred in go round eight that ended his 2017 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo, it was up to Manitoba's Orin Larsen to carry Canada's colours in the bareback riding. Unfortunately, Revolving Door, the Summit Pro Rodeo horse, threw a nasty move at Larsen about six seconds into the ride and the three time WNFR qualifier was forced to double grab, resulting in a no score. After a solid start to his ten days in Las Vegas, that saw him place in five of the first six rounds, Larsen has struggled in the last three rounds--coming up empty in all three. That's the reverse of his 2016 Finals when he was beat up in the opening round and didn't settle into a winning groove until the sixth round. Tonight's ninth round was won by Cleveland, Texas cowboy Jake Brown with an 87.5 ride. But for the second year in a row it's been the Tim O'Connell show both at the Finals and throughout the season. O'Connell was 85 points for a 4/5 split in round nine and carries a lead of \$92,000 into Saturday's tenth round.

The bronc riding Gods were not smiling on the Canadian trio tonight as reigning world champion Zeke Thurston was disqualified while both 2015 Canadian Champion, Clay Elliott, and reigning Canadian title-holder, Layton Green, were both bucked off. Meanwhile the unbelievable story of 19 year-old Ryder Wright continues to unfold in front of the Thomas and Mack faithful. Wright won the 9th round with an 87 point effort on Korkow Rodeo's Kitty Whistle. The win was Wright's fourth of this Finals after he won five rounds in his rookie season a year ago. The son of World Champion Cody Wright, the sensational sophomore now holds a \$47,000 lead heading into Saturday and sits 4th in the average. Hillsdale Wyoming cowboy, Brody Cress, who leads the average, made the most of his third meeting of 2017 with Calgary Stampede's Stampede Warrior. This time the pair combined for a 3/4 split and a \$13,326 payday leaving Cress with an outside shot at a world title.

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. The organization holds the Grass Roots Final (at the Agrium Western Event Centre, Stampede Park in Calgary, Alberta) each September and their premiere event - the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) - in November. Follow the CPRA on Twitter and Instagram @prorodeocanada, 'Like' Canadian Professional Rodeo Association on Facebook or online at RodeoCanada.com.

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