



Pre Cowboy Christmas Riches

Airdrie, ALTA – June 27, 2017

“Things tend to go better when I actually enter the rodeo.” Steer wrestler Scott Guenthner chuckled ruefully as he thought back to his Wainwright Stampede (non) experience for 2016.

And he was right—this year the Consort cowboy did enter the rodeo and things went much better.

Guenthner followed up a winning 4.0 second run at High River’s Guy Weadick Days (\$1989) with a strong three head performance at Wainwright. The three time CFR qualifier was third in the first go round, eighth in the second round, split 2/3 in the short go and wound up second in the average (13.7 seconds on three, behind only Coleman Kohorst’s 13.3). The result was a tidy \$5077 haul out of Wainwright and a \$7066 weekend overall.

The payday(s) virtually guarantee Guenthner another trip to Edmonton in November for the CFR; he was already leading the Canadian standings with \$9617 won heading into the weekend, and will provide a handy boost up the standings south of the 49th parallel as well. The likable 26 year-old bulldogger was sitting 13th in the PRCA standings and hoped the productive weekend would see him claw his way back into the top ten in the world.

Guenthner pointed to mental preparation as the key to his 2017 success to date. “I’m trying to use my head, to make consistent, solid runs and put everything else out of my mind. Last year I got off to a pretty good start but between the middle of July and the end of August, I broke barriers to cost myself \$30,000.”

The new game plan - that sees Guenthner have a target of \$2000 in earnings every weekend - has been working well as he and Smoke (the Milans’ horse) have been lighting it up both in Canada and the US with a consistency that speaks to the confidence and focus that have become the Guenthner trademarks.

“I know there will be weekends when I don’t hit that \$2000 but there will be some, like this one, where I can win more than that.”

Yeah, actually quite a lot more than that on this weekend. And that sets the stage for the next phase of Guenthner’s season. “I won’t be home for the next two months,” the second generation cowboy admitted. “I’m pushing to get to Salt Lake City (one million dollar gold medal rodeo) in July and I need to be in the top ten to get there. It’s tough... there’s so many good guys, both up here and down south but I know it’s there if I just keep doing what I do.”

It might be the comeback story of the year. For Roosevelt, Utah roper, Rhen Richard, it looked like a lost season. Losing the thumb on his roping hand, having it re-attached but with accompanying numbness and missing four months during the recovery process seemed to signal the end - at least in the tie down roping

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for 2017. But a casual practice session not long before Grande Prairie changed things. "It didn't feel too bad so I decided to throw my name in there for Grande Prairie and Leduc and see what happened."

While it didn't go well at the northern Alberta rodeo, Richard split bottom hole at Leduc, then won Rocky Mountain House a week later, setting the stage for Wainwright, the first Pro Tour Rodeo stop of the season. Richard won third in the second go round, split the short go (with Russell Cardoza) with a 9.1 second run and captured the average with his 28.8 second total on three runs, to top out at just over \$6000 and vault into contention for a return trip the CFR in November.

"I'm having a little trouble getting my slack," Richard confessed. "It's not as clean as I'd like it to be and I struggle a little with getting the (piggin) string out of my mouth. But other than that, it actually feels pretty good."

While the 28 year-old has been riding a new horse through the spring and early summer (six year-old Patron), he returned to an old friend - Little Joe - for Wainwright. The combination clicked once again and the race for a CFR berth was on for Richard, now comfortably in the top ten in Canada.

And there's more reason for optimism from the Richard camp as he has teamed up with eight time world champion Rich Skelton in the team roping. "I'm pretty excited about that. Our styles fit and I think we could do pretty well. Our goal is to get to the CFR and maybe our circuit finals this year and win enough to get into the big buildings down south next year," Richard noted. "We'll go hard until after Cheyenne and then re-evaluate at that point."

Other big winners for the weekend included Barrhead's Kolton Schmidt who won Wainwright for the second year in a row. After besting the field in 2016 with Shay Carroll on the heeling side, this time around the 2016 NFR qualifier teamed with seven time NFR qualifier Dugan Kelly to take home \$5000 per man and confirm themselves as one of the teams to beat en route to the 2017 CFR.

Abilene, Texas barrel racer Jackie Ganter had a big weekend as she vies for a return trip to Northlands Coliseum in November. The 20 year old collected second place money at Sundre, High River and the long go at Wainwright, then finished 5th in the average at Wainwright where she too was defending champion, to grow her bank account by just under \$7,000.

And in the saddle bronc riding, Layton Green won the long go, was second in the short go and won the average at Wainwright, then added a small cheque at Sundre for a \$4900 weekend.

And south of the line, a quintet of Canadians made their presence felt at the rich Reno Rodeo, none more so than Donalda's Curtis Cassidy who was 4th in the first go of the bull dogging, won the short go with a 4.2 second run and finished second overall for a whopping \$9200 payday. Add in the \$3200 the twelve time Canadian champion picked up in the tie down roping and steer wrestling at Sundre and Cassidy will need to lease a Brinks truck to get the week's earnings to the bank. Manitoba bareback rider Orin Larsen placed in both go rounds and the finals to finish third overall for a sizable \$5669 Reno payoff while World Champion saddle bronc rider Zeke Thurston collected \$4852 in Reno and Canadian bull riding champion Jordan Hansen rode out of Nevada just over \$2000 to the good. And BC bronc rider Jake Watson had a productive \$5692 weekend between a round win at Reno, the title at High River and a smaller cheque out of Wainwright.

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Cowboy Christmas kicks off in Canada this week with the Ponoka Stampede running from June 27 to July 3, the Williams Lake Stampede from July 29 to July 22 (both are Canadian Pro Tour rodeos) and the Airdrie Pro Rodeo from June 28 to July 2.

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 September 29-30, 2017 for our 4th Annual Grass Roots Final (at the Agrium Western Event Centre, Stampede Park in Calgary, Alberta) and for our premiere event - the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) November 8-12, 2017 at Northlands Coliseum in Edmonton, Alberta. 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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