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Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo Where Champions Play the First Weekend in May

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Champion horse continues winning

GUYMON, Okla. – Dirty Jacket is one of the most decorated bucking horses in ProRodeo.

The 11-year-old bay gelding from Pete Carr Pro Rodeo is the reigning Bareback Horse of the Year as voted on by members of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association. He also has been one of the top three horses in the year-end voting each of the past three seasons.

At the 2014 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in December, the athletic horse proved the accolades, guiding cowboys to go-round victories both times he bucked inside the Thomas & Mack Center: Richmond Champion of The Woodlands, Texas, won the fifth round, while Caleb Bennett of Tremonton, Utah, claimed the 10th-round title.

“There’s not another horse like him,” said Champion, who also won the Cheyenne (Wyo.) Frontier Days title after a 91-point ride in July. “Dirty Jacket might’ve even looked better than he did that day in Cheyenne.”

The fifth and 10th rounds featured the greatest bucking horses in rodeo, an elite list of phenomenal athletes. Even then, Dirty Jacket stood out. Now he will have a chance to stand out again at the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo, set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 1; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 2; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 3, at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena. It’s a place where he’s guided cowboys to the prestigious Guymon title four times in the last seven years.

“There wasn’t a bad horse in the pen, but to have Dirty Jacket again at the NFR and to win the round was awesome,” said Champion, who shared the Guymon title last year on Fancy Free, another great Carr bucking horse. “There’s not another night that you get to walk down the alley with that caliber of horse standing all next to each other.

“That same feeling runs in all of us to see that kind of horse lined up for us, just standing outside the Thomas & Mack. That’s what dreams are made of in this sport.”

It’s the same feeling Bennett had when he prepared for the final night of the competition. It had been a rough week for the Utah cowboy, who had placed in just one round prior to the 10th night.

“I couldn’t have been more blessed and ask for anything more than to end it the way I did on Dirty Jacket,” he said. “It’s a phenomenal horse and definitely one of the ones you want to have in this round.”

The powerful gelding is one of four Pete Carr horses that have received the top honor in bareback riding, joining pasture-mates like Real Deal, Big Tex and MGM Deuces Night. In 2013, when Dirty Jacket was named Reserve World Champion Bareback Horse, he helped cowboys to at least a share of the title 12 of 13 times he performed during the regular season. In 2014, his wins were just as miraculous.

Champion’s 91 in Cheyenne was one of two of the highest marked rides of the campaign. The other was by Steven Dent, who rode Dirty Jacket for a matching 91 on the final weekend of the regular season at the Cowboy Capital of the World Rodeo in Stephenville, Texas, in September.

“Any time you can draw one that everybody wants, you’re happy with it whether you’re in that situation or it’s a regular-season rodeo,” said Dent, a seven-time NFR qualifier from Mullen, Neb. “You

don't have the opportunity to get on a horse that you can be that many points on and that's that fun to get on very often in your life, much less the last week of the year when you're trying to make the NFR.

"That is a really great horse. There are not very many of them like him that do it every time, that are that electric, jump that high in the air and that you can be that many points on."

The horse has been selected to buck at the NFR each of the past seven seasons. Earlier this year, Jessy Davis scored 93 points during the Cinch Shootout at the San Angelo Stock Show Rodeo.

"He has a huge frame, but he's so athletic from nose to tail. He just looks like an athlete. If you could pick a horse out of a herd that could jump nine feet in the air, he's that horse," Champion said. "If you're going to win a big rodeo, that's the horse you want."

Dirty Jacket is powerful, athletic and consistent, but what makes him a proven winner year after year is in the effort he puts forward every trip. He has the heart of a champion.