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

For information  
Contact Ted Harbin

(660) 254-1900  
[imteditor@gmail.com](mailto:imteditor@gmail.com)

# **Rodeo's best crave titles in Guymon**

GUYMON, Okla. – The most coveted trophy in rodeo is the Montana Silversmiths world champion's gold buckle.

Many who have earned them have them fastened to another prestigious trophy, the belt awarded to champions of the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo. The race for this year's championship belts is set for Monday, April 27-Sunday, May 3, at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena. Performances will take place at 7:30 p.m. Friday; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday; and 2 p.m. Sunday.

Like every other trophy Trevor Brazile has, there are multiple Pioneer Days belts on display in his Decatur, Texas, home. The 21-time world champion – 12 all-around, five steer roping, three tie-down roping and one heading – is the reigning all-around titlist in Guymon.

He loves the opportunity to win more.

"I grew up 30 minutes from Guymon," he said, referring to a childhood spent in Gruver, Texas. "I've still got a lot of friends up there.

"It's a great rodeo. I love the fans up there. They're die-hard fans. When you go to Guymon, you're pretty sure the wind's going to blow. You're not sure if it's going to be cold or hot, but it's a cowboy environment. I just enjoy it."

Why shouldn't he? Each May, he is the favorite to walk away with multiple titles, just like he did in 2012; that season, he won the all-around, heading (with heeling partner Patrick Smith) and steer roping crowns.

But Brazile isn't the only world champion wearing the prized belt. In 2010 after winning the bareback riding championship, three-time titlist Will Lowe of Canyon, Texas, received his trophy two nights before the start of the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. He ripped off the belt he was wearing, unfastened his 2003 gold buckle and attached it to the new leather.

Turtle Powell, the 2011 heading world champion from Stephenville, Texas, won the Guymon title a year ago, while 2014 bull riding world titlist Sage Kimzey of Strong City, Okla., parlayed his top score in No Man's Land to his first gold buckle.

Other world champions have found great success inside Hitch Arena in recent years are Ryan Jarrett, Matt Sherwood, Rocky Patterson, Jhett Johnson, Chad Ferley, Dean Gorsuch and Tuf Cooper. All are regulars in the Oklahoma Panhandle each May, but the competition isn't just limited to the elite players in the game. In fact, nearly 1,000 contestants make their way to Texas County each spring.

The week begins with four rounds of steer roping Monday and Tuesday, followed by the team ropers, tie-down ropers and steer wrestlers Wednesday and Thursday competing in two rounds. The top scores in the aggregate return for the performances. Barrel racers compete in the first round Friday morning, with the top times returning to the performances; the remaining cowgirls will make their second-round runs shortly after the first round is complete.

"We're there all week, which makes it nice; I need a time-share, but there aren't a lot of them in Guymon," Brazile said with a laugh. "It's important to me to go to the rodeos that keep tradition alive, and they do that well in Guymon. I'm happy to support it."