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

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Guymon has been good for Koontz

GUYMON, Okla. – The magic number for Kory Koontz is 20.

He's one of the greatest ropers in ProRodeo and might just be the best heeler to have never won a world championship. Over the course of his storied career, the Sudan, Texas, cowboy has qualified for the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo 19 times. He'd like 2015 to mark his 20th trip to the sport's grand finale.

"For a long time, the number in my mind that I had was that I wanted to make 20 of them," he said, referring to the 10-round finale that takes place in Las Vegas each December. "I've missed it the last three years."

On Friday night, he made another significant move in his plan to return by taking the third-round and average lead at the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo with header Colby Lovell. The tandem posted a 7.1-second run during the first performance; their cumulative time of 20.1 seconds through three go-rounds gives them a significant advantage with three performances remaining in Oklahoma's richest rodeo.

"I think I've won it twice," said Koontz, who just resumed his partnership with Lovell in the last couple of months. "I've been here at least 20 times."

Now he'd like to win his third Pioneer Days Rodeo trophy belt with Lovell; the two roped together in 2010, the first of four straight NFR qualifications for Lovell. Since then, Koontz has teamed with Erich Rogers, Brock Hanson and Chad Masters, while Lovell has partnered with York Gill, Russell Cardoza and Martin Lucero.

They quickly found success in 2015 as partners, so they decided to stick it out.

"Our plan is to stay in Texas and here in Oklahoma and get some money," Koontz said. "When it's time to go to Reno (Nev.) and get going for the summer, we'll give it a run and try to get back to the NFR."

"Now we've got our game face on, and we're going to give it everything we've got to go back there."

As long as they continue to find success like they have in the Oklahoma Panhandle this week, their chances are good.

"We're just doing our job," Koontz said. "We drew just medium-type steers, and we did what we do. My partner did a good job, and I came around there and heeled all three of them. It was almost like we made the same runs three times in a row."

That seems to be a winning combination.

Guymon (Okla.) Pioneer Days Rodeo April 27-May 3

Results through the first performance

Bareback riding leaders: 1. (tie) Zachariah Phillips, on Pete Carr Pro Rodeo's Cool Change, and Tim O'Connell, on Pete Carr's Classic Pro Rodeo's Fancy Free, 85 points each; 3. Mason Clements, 80; 4. (tie) Devan Reilly and Richmond Champion, 78 each; 6. Will Martin, 77; 7. Kody Lamb, 74; 8. Anthony Tomas, 73.

Team roping: Third round leaders: 1. Colby Lovell/Kory Koontz, 7.1 seconds; 2. Jake Cooper/Tyler McKnight, 7.5; 3. Bobby Boyd/Johnny Folmer, 11.6; 4. Logan Olson/Jordan Olson, 11.7; 5. Caleb Smidt/Mickey Gomez,

13.0; 6. Brandon Webb/Kaleb Driggers, 13.3; 7. Brett Christensen/Chase Boekhaus, 16.5; no other qualified runs. **Aggregate leaders:** 1. Colby Lovell/Kory Koontz, 20.1 seconds on three runs; 2. Jake Cooper/Tyler McKnight, 21.0; 3. Brandon Webb/Kaleb Driggers, 29.8; 4. Logan Olson/Jordan Olson, 37.7; 5. Bobby Boyd/Johnny Folmer, 41.2; 6. Caleb Smidt/Mickey Gomez, 43.0; Brett Christensen/Chase Boekhaus, 53.0; 8. Coleman Proctor/Jake Long, 13.3 seconds on two runs.

Steer roping: Fifth round leaders: 1. Chance Kelton, 12.2 seconds; 2. Shay Good, 13.6; 3. Scott Snedecor, 14.3; 4. J. Tom Fisher, 19.8; no other qualified times. **Aggregate leaders:** 1. Scott Snedecor, 68.8 seconds on four runs; 2. Chance Kelton, 69.6; 3. Tuf Cooper, 90.3; 4. JoJo LeMond, 93.2; 5. Vin Fisher Jr., 110.24; 6. Brodie Poppino, 52.7 seconds on three runs.

Saddle bronc riding leaders: 1. (tie) Tyler Corrington, on Lancaster & Pickett Rodeo's Wild Flower, and Wade Sundell, on Lancaster & Pickett Rodeo's Badlands, 78 points each; 3. (tie) Chet Johnson and Cort Scheer, 77; 5. Jade Blackwell, 76; 6. Chans Darling, 73; 7. Casey Maddox, 70; 8. Nick Shenold, 59.

Steer wrestling: Third round leaders: 1. Wade Sumpter, 3.9 seconds; 2. Forest Sainsbury, 4.7; 3. Sean Mulligan, 4.8; 4. Dean Stermer, 5.8; 5. Billy Boldon, 5.9; 6. Darrel Petry, 6.0; 7. Juan Alcazar Jr., 17.9; no other qualified times. **Aggregate leaders:** 1. Forest Sainsbury, 19.4 seconds on three runs; 2. Darrell Petry, 20.5; 3. Sean Mulligan, 24.0; 4. Wade Sumpter, 25.4; 5. Dean Sterner, 26.2; 6. Dean Boldon, 28.2; 7. Juan Alcazar Jr., 31.4; 8. Hunter Lewis, 8.4 seconds on two runs.

Tie-down roping: Third round leaders: 1. Shane Hanchey, 7.9 seconds; 2. Cory Solomon, 9.1; 3. Robert Mathis, 9.8; 4. Tyson Durfey, 10.2; 5. (tie) Jake Pratt and Cheyenne Stanley, 11.2 each; no other qualified times.

Aggregate leaders: 1. Shane Hanchey, 24.8 seconds on three runs; 2. Cory Solomon, 26.0; 3. Jake Pratt, 26.5; 4. Robert Mathis, 32.5; 5. Cheyenne Stanley, 34.8; 6. Tyson Durfey, 34.9; 7. Tyler Prcin, 16.6 seconds on two runs; 8. (tie) Blane Cox and Reese Reimer, 17.6.

Barrel racing: Second round leaders: 1. Heather Clayton, 16.94 seconds; 2. Mary Walker, 17.12; 3. (tie) Laura Kennedy and Carley Richardson, 17.19; 5. Brittany Pozzi, 17.25; 6. Fallon Taylor, 17.29; 7. Rebecca Hughes, 17.30; 8. Lanita Peirce, 17.31; 9. Jaime Hinton, 17.33; 10. Sherrylynn Johnson, 17.34. **Aggregate leaders:** 1. Mary Walker, 34.13 seconds on two runs; 2. Brittany Pozzi, 34.52; 3. Jaime Hinton, 34.74; 4. Fallon Taylor, 34.81; 5. Natalie Bland, 34.87; 6. Rebecca Hughes, 34.96; 7. Andrea Busby, 35.11. 8. Kaylee Gallino, 35.19.

Bull riding leaders: 1. Trevor kastner, 86 points on Pete Carr's Classic Pro Rodeo's Sazerac; 2. Brett Stall, 84; 3. Chris McCombs, 83; 4. Chris McCombs, 82; no other qualified rides.