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

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Funnyman returning to Guymon

GUYMON, Okla. – There are things in this world that people want to see many times over.

The Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo is one of those for rodeo funnyman Cody Sosebee. He returns for this year's festivities, set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 6; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 7; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 8, at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena.

"What I love about Guymon is that it's a cowboy's rodeo," said Sosebee, who will work the Texas County, Okla., rodeo for the third time in his career. "It may not have the flashy lights of Las Vegas, but it's just as big of an event to work as any of the other top rodeos in the world. They get the best cowboys in rodeo, and you know they're going to show up with their game faces on.

"It's a real rodeo crowd, but they still appreciate good entertainment. They'll cheer for me and support me like they do any 85-point bronc ride. I love it there."

The feeling is mutual.

"Cody has been a great addition to our rodeo ever year he's been here," said Jim Quimby, chairman of the volunteer committee that produces the annual rodeo. "The first time he came to Pioneer Days Rodeo, we knew we wanted him to come back."

Not much has changed since Sosebee last performed in the Oklahoma Panhandle in 2012. Guymon's rodeo continues to be one of the most prestigious events in ProRodeo and has continually featured nearly 1,000 contestants every May. The biggest change occurred in the last few months, when the Pioneer Days Rodeo committee was inducted in to the ProRodeo Hall of Fame.

Guymon is one of those top stops that has come Sosebee's way; a regular nominee for Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Clown of the Year, he has worked many top events, including Dodge City, Kan.; Omaha, Neb.; Calgary, Alberta; and Cheyenne, Wyo.

"You get to work with an A team of personnel and an A team list of stock," Sosebee said of the Guymon rodeo. "Anytime you get to work with people who excel in their field, it only makes me that much better."

In addition to his clowning nomination, the former competitor also has been nominated for the PRCA Comedy Act of the Year two of the past three seasons. But there's much more to Sosebee than meets the eye. Over his lifetime, he's competed in nearly every rodeo event possible and was at the top of his game in bareback riding.

It's part of the life growing up in a family that was heavily involved in rodeo. His father was a pickup man, so Sosebee has been part of the sport as long as he can remember.

"I got into clowning by accident by filling in for guys," said Sosebee, who also owns a barbecue restaurant in his hometown of Charleston, Ark., just 25 miles east of Fort Smith, Ark. "I didn't know where I was going to go with my rodeo career when I quit riding barebacks, and it turned into a good living. I get to see the world."

A born competitor, the clown has made the adjustments he needed to get the true fix after a lifetime of being part of the contest.

“I’ve always been a competitor in anything I did, from football to basketball to when I was in freestyle bullfighting,” he said. “I miss putting my hand in the riggin’ and nodding my head to be 80 points to win the rodeo, but I’m a realist. I’m 43 years old. While most of the guys I rodeoed with have slowed down and have found jobs, I get to be in the arena and get to make a living in rodeo doing something I love.”

Sosebee also plays to his strengths. Bigger than many in the game, he showcases a true athleticism that is rarely seen among men of his stature. It’s comedy at the purest level.

“Having the ability to laugh at myself is probably my biggest strength,” he said. “I don’t take anything too serious. When I’m watching a comedian, the funniest thing I see is when they’re honestly open and having a good time. I want the fans to see that I’m a real person and I’m having fun, and they can have fun with me.”

That’s why Sosebee has excelled as one of the premier rodeo clowns in the game. That’s why the volunteer committee is bringing him to town. It’s another key reason Pioneer Days has been inducted into the ProRodeo Hall of Fame.