

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

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Wright rides from Guymon jinx

GUYMON, Okla. – Rusty Wright knew he had a chance to change his fortunes in this Oklahoma Panhandle town.

He did that Saturday night during the third performance of the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo, matching moves with Powder River Rodeo's Look Again for 87 points to take the saddle bronc riding lead. He'll have to wait until Sunday's final performance to see where his score lands, but he must like his chances to claim this coveted championship.

"I've never actually had any luck until this year," said Wright, a two-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualifier from Milford, Utah, who now sits 20th in the world standings. "It was a little slow start coming back from my leg (injury). The past couple of weeks I've been drawing good and riding them good enough. I'm moving up the standings."

Wright suffered a broken leg late last season and just recovered in time to compete at the NFR. The lingering effects of the injury, though, carried over to 2017.

His ride Saturday should help. The big brown horse jumped and kicked straight across the Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena, and Wright showed off that classic spur stroke to score the big points.

"That horse jumps really high and kicks really hard," he said. "He feels like he's really bucking, but at the same time, it's really smooth because you're ahead of him and beating him to the ground."

The key in bronc riding is to have the heels of the boots to the front of the animal's shoulders as the front hooves hit the ground. As the stroke moves to the back of the saddle then to the front again, a good ride looks like a rhythmic dance.

"That's the kind of horse that if you're not ahead of him and have your feet set (above the horse's shoulders) before he hits the ground, he'll make you pay for it," Wright said. "He's a bucker, but he feels good if you're doing everything right."

He was. But that's become a staple for the Wright family. Rusty Wright travels the rodeo trail with his younger brother, Ryder, their father, Cody, and their uncle, Spencer. All have performed at the NFR: Cody Wright is a two-time world champion, and Spencer won the 2014 gold buckle. Ryder Wright won five of 10 go-rounds last year and finished fourth in the world standings.

Now just 21, Rusty Wright is making quite a name for himself, but he understands that he's had quite a bit of help in the process. He has three other uncles that ride broncs: Alex and twins Jesse and Jake. The twins also have been to the NFR, and Jesse won the 2012 world title.

"It's hard enough being away from home," he said. "With these guys with you, it's not as bad. When you're not doing very good, they just make it better. My dad and all my uncles have been there and done that. When my brother and I need advice, they're right there."

Family is important, but to a competitor, winning is also a vital part of the process. Rusty Wright knows that as well as anyone

Guymon (Okla.) Pioneer Days Rodeo
May 2-7
Results through the first performance

Bareback riding leaders: 1. Clayton Biglow, 86.5 points on Pickett Pro Rodeo's Bar Code; 2. Jordan Petlon, 84; 3. Tanner Phipps, 83.5; 4. Jake Brown, 82.5; 5. Luke Creasy, 82; 6. Mason Clements, 80.5; 7. (tie) J.C. Hester Jr., Tim O'Connell and Jamie Howlett, 80.

Team roping: Third round leaders: 1. Clay Smith/Jake Smith, 5.8 seconds; 2. Luke Brown/Jake Long, 6.4; 3. Brooks Dahozy/Tommy Zuniga, 6.7; 4. (tie) Tyler Wade/Clint Summers and Brandon Webb/Kollin VonAhn, 7.0; 6. Brian Dunning/Tad Sheets, 7.4; 7. Jimmy Tanner/Jim Ross Cooper, 7.6; 8. (tie) Kellan Johnson/Jhett Johnson and Blake Deckard/Sawyer Barham, 8.0. **Aggregate leaders:** 1. Brooks Dahozy/Tommy Zuniga, 23.6 seconds on three runs; 2. Shay Carrol/Nano Garza, 27.5; 3. Jimmy Tanner/Jim Ross Cooper, 28.1; 4. Manny Equisquiza Jr./Daniel Braman IV, 28.9; 5. Kyle Letzelter, 29.4; 6. Will Clark/Tanner Ward, 32.9; 7. Blake Deckard/Sawyer Barham, 33.9; 8. Clay Smith/Jake Smith, 37.0.

Steer wrestling: Third round leaders: 1. Tyler Pearson, 3.4 seconds; 2. Riley Duvall, 3.6; 3. Trell Etbauer, 3.7; 4. Jon Ragatz, 3.8; 5. (tie) Ty Erickson, Mike Bates Jr. and Jacob Talley, 4.0; 8. Tyler Waguespack, 4.1.

Aggregate leaders: 1. Ty Erickson, 13.0 seconds on three runs; 2. Tyler Waguespack, 13.1; 3. Jon Ragatz, 14.4; 4. Casey Martin, 14.6; 5. Tyler Pearson, 15.0; 6. Cole Edge, 15.9; 7. (tie) Will Lummus and Trell Etbauer, 16.0.

Saddle bronc riding leaders: 1. Rusty Wright, 87 points on Powder River Rodeo's Look Again; 2. CoBurn Bradshaw, 84.5; 3. Tyler Corrington, 83.5; 4. Jake Wright, 82; 5. Tyrel Smth, 81.5; 6. Hardy Braden, 81; 7. Leon Fountain, 80.5; 8. Cort Scheer, 79.5.

Tie-down roping: Third round leaders: 1. Caddo Lewallen, 7.5 seconds; 2. (tie) Shane Hanchey and Trell Etbauer, 7.7; 4. Cimarron Boardman, 7.9; 5. (tie) Michael Otero and Ryan Jarrett, 8.0; 7. Cory Solomon, 8.1; 8. (tie) Tyson Durfey and Sterling Smith, 8.2. **Aggregate leaders:** 1. Ryan Jarrett, 23.3 seconds on three runs; 2. Shane Hanchey, 23.4; 3. Cory Solomon, 24.9; 4. Michael Otero, 25.1; 5. Tyson Durfey, 25.9; 6. Sterling Smith, 25.9; 7. Cimarron Boardman, 26.5; 8. Trell Etbauer, 26.9.

Barrel racing: Second round leaders: 1. Hailey Kinsel, 17.20 seconds; 2. Stevi Hillman, 17.38; 3. Carmel Wright, 17.45; 4. Dona Kay Rule, 17.46; 5. (tie) Jodi Colton, Kelly Tovar and Cayla Small, 17.49; 8. Tiany Schuster, 17.50; 8. (tie) Lauren Magdeburg and Lake Mehalic, 17.53. **Aggregate leaders:** 1. Hailey Kinsel 35.02 seconds on two runs; 2. Carmel Wright, 35.18; 3. Jodi Colton, 35.22; 4. (tie) Lake Mehalic and Tammy Fischer, 35.25; 6. Mary Walker, 35.34; 7. Carley Richardson, 35.36; 8. (tie) Dona Kay Rule and Kelly Tovar, 35.37; 10. Tiany Schuster, 35.38.

Bull riding leaders: 1. Roscoe Jarbo, 84 points on Pete Carr Pro Rodeo's Apollo's Gold; 2. Trevor Reiste, 84; 3. Boudreaux Campbell, 83; 4. (tie) Jeff Askey and Kyle Ziegler, 82; 6. John Pitts, 80.5; 7. Joe Frost, 80; 8. Trevor Kastner, 77.