

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

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Panhandle pokes find NFR success

GUYMON, Okla. – Over 10 nights in Las Vegas, the Oklahoma Panhandle contingent had quite the memorable run at the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo.

Six cowboys, all with ties to Texas County, earned just shy of \$500,000 collectively while competing at ProRodeo's grand championship. All six are graduates of the Oklahoma Panhandle State University rodeo team and are expected to be part of the mix at this year's Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo, set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 4; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 5; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 6, at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena.

The Panhandle State rodeo program has long garnered the local support, and that continues with the Top Hand Auction, set for 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3, at the Pickle Creek Event Center in Guymon. Proceeds from the auction will go to assist the program.

Back in December, bull rider Joe Frost led the way, placing in seven go-rounds – including the seventh-round victory – and finishing second in the average race. He left Las Vegas with \$169,923 over 10 nights and finished the season with more than \$300,000, good enough for fourth in the final world standings of 2017.

NFR rookie Hardy Braden also had a successful 10-day run. He had two round wins and placed six other nights. He finished second in the average and pocketed \$160,192. Like Frost, Braden also finished fourth in the world standings with just shy of \$263,000.

Braden led the way for the four Panhandle State bronc riders that were part of the championship. Another NFR newcomer, Audy Reed, placed fifth in the NFR average and placed in four go-rounds. He earned \$57,385. Two-time world champion Taos Muncy placed in three rounds, including the 10th-round victory, and pocketed \$54,000. Clay Elliott, competing in Vegas for the second straight year, placed twice and earned \$32,423.

Bareback rider Orin Larsen started off his third straight NFR with a bang. He placed in the first six go-rounds before seeing some luck fall away. Still, he earned just shy of \$72,000 and finished eighth in the world standings with \$171,009.

"I ended up going to OPSU because of their track record and their resume in college and pro rodeo," said Larsen, who won two college championships, the second after transferring to Goodwell. "I'm happy the way I did it."

Although he wasn't part of the 10-night championship, Shade Etbauer was recognized during the NFR. Etbauer, the youngest of Robert Etbauer's three children, finished the year with \$41,726 in saddle bronc riding and earned the Resistol Rookie of the Year title.

With it, Shade Etbauer matched one of the first ProRodeo awards ever earned by his father, a two-time world champion bronc rider. Now he hopes to add a few more buckles to his growing pile of accomplishments.