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RELEASE DATE: Aug. 2, 2022

Askey earn his first X Bulls title

LOVINGTON, N.M. – The ProRodeo action at Jake McClure Arena at the Lea County Fairgrounds kicked off Tuesday, and the Lea County Xtreme Bulls provided plenty of action for fans.

There were several qualified rides, and eight of the 12 men in the championship round recorded scores, making for one of the tightest Xtreme Bulls action that's ever been seen. By the time the dust settled, 12-year pro Jeff Askey pulled out his first Xtreme Bulls Division 1 victory, and it came at a great time.

"I've won second at a bunch of them, and I've won a pile of Division 2 Xtreme Bulls, but I've never won one of the Division 1 events," said Askey, 34, of Athens, Texas.

Askey won the opening round with an 88-point ride on Pete Carr Pro Rodeo's Twister, then finished second in a tie for second place with an 89.5-point ride on Carr's Twilight Zone to claim the best two-ride cumulative score and earn the title. In all, he collected \$10,609 Tuesday night.

With a dozen years in the PRCA, he's been pining for one of the coveted Xtreme Bulls buckles given at the Division 1 events and finally slapped one on his belt.

There was a bit of familiarity in his first-round draw. He'd ridden Twister for 90.5 points a little more than a month ago in Pecos, Texas. That combination seems to work just fine.

"I tried to treat him like he'd do anything, and it just so happens he had a similar trip," said Askey, a four-time National Finals Rodeo qualifier. "He's got a lot of timing, and he kicks a lot. He kind of beat me (out of the chute) and had me behind, enough to rock me a little bit. After about the second or third jump, I felt (like) I gathered him up pretty good and rode him decent.

"If you make the right moves, that bull helps you out."

By winning the opening round, Askey was the last cowboy to ride in the final round. With big scores coming on the board one right after another, he knew he was in for a fight.

"This was crazy," he said. "I've never seen an Xtreme Bulls short round go like this. It's pretty common for guys to ride one, two, three or four bulls in these short goes. I've never seen them ride eight or nine bulls and it get that tough.

"Normally if you win the long round and fall off in the short go, you might hold on to an average check, but after enough rides I thought, 'Heck, I better stay on, or I might not win nothing.' "

Askey pushed his season earnings to more than \$133,000 and will remain third in the world standings. He rides Wednesday night in Abilene, Kansas, then will return to Lovington to compete in the PRCA rodeo Thursday.

"The more you win, it gives you flexibility," Askey said, meaning he can make those decisions whether or not to get on a bull that might not be worth his effort or if he's sore at the end of the month or in September. "When you're down there in the standings, you can't do that. Last year I was 16th. I had to nod my head on just about everything the last two months of the season. I'm up there good enough now, I want to still be making money, but I have that flexibility now that I can take a business approach about it moving forward."

He handled business Tuesday night.

Lea County Xtreme Bulls

Lovington, N.M.

Aug. 2, 2022

First round: 1. Jeff Askey, 88.5 points on Pete Carr Pro Rodeo's Twister, \$3,342; 2. Robbie James Taylor, 88, \$2,562; 3. Garrett Smith, 87, \$1,894; 4. (tie) Francisco Garcia and Maverick Potter, 86.5, \$1,003 each; 6. (tie) Hayes Thayne Weight and Josh Frost, 85.5, \$501 each; 8. Creek Young, 85, \$334. **Championship round:** 1. Garrett Smith, 90 points on Lancaster & Jones' Pale Face, \$2,451; 2. (tie) Josh Frost and Jeff Askey, 89.5, \$1,597 each; 4. Maverick Potter, 88.5, \$891; 5. Creek Young, 88, \$520; 6. (tie) Cole Fisher and Stetson Wright, 87.5, \$186 each. **Average:** 1. Jeff Askey, 178 points on two rides, \$5,670; 2. Garrett Smith, 177, \$4,270; 3. (tie) Josh Frost and Maverick Potter, 175, \$2,599 each; 5. Creek Young, 173, \$1,300; 6. (tie) Stetson Wright and Hayes Thayne Weight, 170, \$835 each; 8. Cole Fisher, 169.5, \$557.