

Media Contact:
Ruth Nicolaus
319-321-2152
For the Red Bluff Round-Up

TRADING HOCKEY FOR RODEO

First performance of Red Bluff Round-Up takes place

Red Bluff, Calif. (April 19, 2019) – Hockey just didn't cut it for cowboy Connor Hamilton.

The Calgary, Alberta man played the sport till he was eighteen years old.

Then he switched to bareback riding, and now, nearly five years later, he's leading the bareback riding at the Red Bluff Round-Up.

Hamilton, who is twenty-three years old, rode the Bridwell Pro Rodeo horse Caddy Wagon for 85.5 points to sit atop the scoreboard.

He'd grown up riding horses, but not frequently, and five years ago, got on his first ever bucking horse.

"I always loved rodeo," he said. "I grew up playing hockey and fell into rodeo."

He visited a local college and met some bareback riders who gave him tips and got him started.

Then he spent a year at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Okla., competing on the college rodeo team and soaking up more knowledge. "It worked out good," he said, of his year in college. "I met a lot of good guys, started pro rodeoing, and fell into it."

Last year, he finished second in the Resistol Rookie standings, second to Zach Hibler, Wheeler, Texas.

In college, he became friends with another Southwestern Oklahoma State student, Sage Kimzey. Kimzey, a five-time world champion bull rider (and reigning champ), helped Hamilton out. "He taught me a lot of mental and physical things, and that was a good thing for me," Hamilton said. "He told me to keep pushing it, keep pushing it, even when you're not where you want to be. And there's only one way to get there."

Hamilton quit college and now rodeos full time. It was his second trip aboard the horse Caddy Wagon. He rode him in Redding, Calif. last year, but didn't mark out the horse, which disqualified him. "I'd seen him since then, and there's been a lot of good scores on that horse. I knew he was going to be good. I was excited to be here, and to get a good score."

Hamilton is currently ranked twenty-seventh in the PRCA world standings.

Other leaders after tonight's performance are steer wrestlers Hank Filippini, Battle Mountain, Nev. and Dakota Eldridge, Elko, Nev. (5.4 seconds each); saddle bronc rider Jacobs Crawley, Boerne, Texas (86); tie-down roper Haven Meged, Miles City, Mont. (9.0 seconds); team ropers Hayes Smith, Central Point, Ore. and Evan Arnold, Stephenville, Texas (6.4 seconds); and barrel racer Jessie Telford, Caldwell, Ida. (17.27 seconds). Bull rider Trey Benton, III, Rock Island, Texas, leads his event with a score of 88 points. If his score would hold through Sunday's performance, this will be the third time for him to win the Round-Up.

The second of three performances of the Red Bluff Round-Up takes place Saturday, April 20. The Kiwanis Pancake breakfast runs from 7-10 am, and the rodeo parade kicks off at 10 am. The rodeo begins at 2:30 pm. Aaron Watson is in concert on Saturday night, with Chad Bushnell opening. For more information, visit the rodeo's website at RedBluffRoundup.com. Tickets range in price from \$14 to \$30 and are available at the gate and online.

Results after first performance, Red Bluff Round-Up, April 19, 2018

Bareback riding

1. Connor Hamilton, Calgary, Alb. 85.5 points on Bridwell Pro Rodeo's Caddy Wagon; 2. Mason Clements, Draper, Utah 83; 3. Tilden Hooper, Carthage, Texas 82; 4. Clint Laye, Cadogan, Alb. 81.5.

Steer wrestling

1. (tie) Hank Filippini, Battle Mountain, Nev. and Dakota Eldridge, Elko, Nev. 5.4 seconds each; 3. Justin Kimsey, Kennewick, Wash. 5.5; 4. Blaine Jones, Templeton, Calif. 5.6.

Tie-down roping

1. Haven Meged, Miles City, Mont. 9.0 seconds; 2. Westyn Hughes, Caldwell, Texas 9.7; 3. Cooper Martin, Alma, Kan. 11.0; 4. Lane Livingston, Seymour, Texas 11.1.

Saddle bronc riding

1. Jacobs Crawley, Boerne, Texas 86 points on C5 Rodeo's Strokin' Toni; 2. Jesse Kruse, Great Falls, Mont. 85; 3. Layton Green, Meeting Creek, Alb. 83.5; 4. Shane Proctor, Grand Coulee, Wash. 81.5.

Team Roping

1. Hayes Smith, Central Point, Ore./Evan Arnold, Stephenville, Texas 6.4 seconds; 2. Preston Burgess, Hilmar, Calif./Joseph Shawnego, Oakdale, Calif. 7.1; 3. Dillon Holyfield, Lewiston, Idaho/Robert Murphy, Congress, Ariz. 7.4; 4. Brooks Dahozy, Window Rock, Ariz./Nano Garza, Las Cruces, N.M. 8.0.

Barrel racing

1. Jessie Telford, Caldwell, Idaho 17.27 seconds; 2. Leia Pluemer, Los Lunas, N.M. 17.44; 3. Katie Pascoe, Morro Bay, Calif. 17.45; 4. Lea Orsburn, Hornbrook, Calif 17.61.

Bull riding

1. Trey Benton, III, Rock Island, Texas 88 points on Bridwell Pro Rodeo's Vegas Outlaw; 2. Parker Breeding, Edgar, Mont. 86; 3. Foster McCraw, Navasota, Texas 85; 4. Paul Coppini, 83.

** All results are unofficial. For more information, visit RedBluffRoundup.com.

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Cutline: Bareback rider Connor Hamilton leads in his event at the Red Bluff (Calif.) Round-Up after the first performance. The Calgary, Alberta cowboy began riding bucking horses five years ago, trading in his hockey stick for a bareback rigging. Photo by Hubbell Rodeo Photography.