

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo

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Cooper snares lead at San Angelo

SAN ANGELO, Texas – For the last several years, Tuf Cooper has chased ProRodeo's most elusive title: all-around world champion.

He won the grand gold buckle in 2017 and has been in the mix in the three seasons since. In fact, he's second in the all-around world standings heading into the opening weekend of competition at the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo.

Alas, his focus has changed for the 2021 season, thanks in large part to his acquisition of a new tie-down roping horse, Blanco, a 9-year-old gray gelding Cooper rode in the first two performances at the Foster Communications Coliseum. Cooper leads the two-run aggregate with a cumulative time of 15.4 seconds, highlighted by his 7.3-second, opening-round run Friday night; that time stands as the first-round lead through three performances.

"I got this new horse from Cade Swor," Cooper said of his fellow tie-down roper from Winnie, Texas. "We fit each other like peas and carrots. It's helped my mindset and approach to do what I do. I'm working extremely hard to accomplish what I want."

His sights are set on a fourth tie-down roping world title. He's going to take advantage of his new partner and give chase to something he knows so well. He's the youngest son of calf roping legend Roy Cooper, and Tuf Cooper won his tie-down roping gold in 2011-12 and 2014.

"Cade set the record for selling the most expensive calf horse," he said, chuckling a bit at the reality. "It's the price you pay, but it's the value you get. I'm out here to live my dream and win a world title, and I feel like he's going to give me the best chance to do that."

"My dad and grandpa told me that if I had to have the best horse to win. It doesn't matter how good you rope if you don't have the best horse. He fits me as good as any horse ever. I don't have to do anything more than what I need to do. He does the rest for me."

Cooper was 8.1 seconds during Saturday's matinee performance, and he's already produced one of his best-ever outings in the storied coliseum in front of packed crowds that have arrived early for this year's rodeo.

"It's awesome to compete there, because it's like a homecourt advantage for tie-down ropers," he said. "They're big rodeo fans, but they really like calf roping out here."

Part of that is because of the incredible roping that happens during this rodeo, but San Angelo is also home to the Roping Fiesta, a big-time calf-roping that takes place each fall; it is the longest-running stand-alone roping event in the nation.

"It has been a great city for rodeo," said Cooper, 31, of Decatur, Texas. "San Angelo is a second home for calf ropers. I feel like I grew up here with jackpots and the Roping Fiesta. The ProRodeo has gotten really good over the years. I didn't win a check my first six years there. It took me a little while to figure out how to win in that coliseum."

"I've never won the rodeo, but I'd like to. They always get 150 tie-down ropers, so that makes for really tough competition."

He has a great chance to win this year's title. He is right in line to carry the aggregate lead into the championship round on Friday, April 23, based on results over the previous five seasons. This year's

cast of characters features 178 entries in tie-down roping, so there are plenty of men yet to rope. Still, he has virtually locked down his spot to rope for the title in less than two weeks.

In the meantime, he will travel to compete at California rodeos in Red Bluff and Clovis before returning to his home state of Texas.

“Short go-rounds are where every contestant wants to be, or at least they’re definitely where I want to be,” Cooper said. “That’s where the biggest money is. Especially with not knowing how the season will play out, you know you need to win big every chance you can.”

He’s well on his way.

San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo

April 9-23

Bareback riding leaders: 1. Cole Franks, 88 points on Macza Pro Rodeo’s Hot Flash; 2. Tilden Hooper, 87; 3. Tim O’Connell, 86; 4. Chad Rutherford, 85.5; 5. Luke Creasy, 85; 6. Cauby Pool, 84; 7. Will Martin, 80; 8. (tie) Jacob Lees and Bronc Marriott, 77; 10. Logan Patterson, 74; no other qualified rides.

Steer wrestling: First round leaders: 1. Wyatt Jurney, 4.0 seconds; 2. Jason Thomas, 4.6; 3. (tie) Clayton Hass and J.D. Struxness, 5.0; 5. (tie) Will Lummus and Kodie Jang, 5.2; 7. Bubba Boots, 5.4; 8. Zack Jongbloed, 6.1.

Second round leaders: 1. Kodie Jang, 4.5 seconds; 2. J.D. Struxness, 4.6; 3. Bubba Boots, 4.9; 4. (tie) Jace Melvin and Dirk Tavenner, 5.0; 6. Zack Jongbloed, 5.2; 7. Tanner Brunner, 12.1; 8. Wyatt Jurney, 14.3. **Average leaders:** 1. J.D. Struxness, 9.6 seconds on two rides; 2. Kodie Jang, 9.7; 3. Bubba Boots, 10.3; 4. Zack Jongbloed, 11.3; 5. Jace Melvin, 11.5; 6. Wyatt Jurney, 18.3; 7. Dirk Tavenner, 18.7; 8. Jason Thomas, 4.6; 9. Clayton Hass, 5.0; 10. Will Lummus, 5.2.

Team roping: First round leaders: 1. Cody Snow/Wesley Thorp, 4.2 seconds; 2. Clay Smith/Jade Corkill, 4.3; 3. Hayes Smith/Justin Davis, 4.4; 4. Tyler Wade/Trey Yates, 4.6; 5. (tie) Brenten Hall/Chase Tryan and Aaron Tsinigine/Kyle Lockett, 4.7; 8. Nick Sartain/Reagan Ward, 5.2; 4. Levi Simpson/Tyler Worley, 7.7; 5. Derrick Begay/Jake Edwards, 10.2; no other qualified times. **Second round leaders:** 1. Jr. Dees/Rich Skelton, 3.7 seconds; 2. Cody Snow/Wesley Thorp, 5.2; 3. Brenten Hall/Chase Tryan, 5.3; 4. Nelson Wyatt/Levi Lord, 8.7; no other qualified times. **Average leaders:** 1. Cody Snow/Wesley Thorp, 9.4 seconds on two runs; 2. Brenten Hall/Chase Tryan, 10.0; 3. Jr. Dees/Rich Skelton, 3.7 seconds on one run; 4. Nick Sartain/Reagan Ward, 5.2; 5. Levi Simpson/Tyler Worley, 7.7; 6. Nelson Wyatt/Levi Lord, 8.7; 7. Derrick Begay/Jake Edwards, 10.2; no other qualified times.

Saddle bronc riding leaders: 1. (tie) Cort Scheer, on Pete Carr Pro Rodeo’s The Darkness, and Isaac Diaz, on Macza Pro Rodeo’s Lucky Cab, 83.5 points; 3. Allen Boore, 83; 4. Lucas Macza, 82.5; 5. Brody Cress, 81.5; 6. Mitch Pollock, 81; 7. Jade Blackwell, 80; 8. Toby Collins, 73; 9. Johnny Espeland, 71; 10. Kolt Ferguson, 65.

Tie-down roping: First round leaders: 1. Tuf Cooper, 7.3 seconds; 2. Riley Pruitt, 8.0; 3. Cooper Martin, 8.6; 4. Westyn Hughes, 8.7; 5. (tie) Blane Cox and Shane Hanchey, 8.9; 7. Chris McCuiston, 9.4; 8. Catfish Brown, 9.8.

Second round leaders: 1. Cooper Martin, 8.0 seconds; 2. Tuf Cooper, 8.1; 3. Ty Harris, 8.6; 4. Tyler Milligan, 9.0; 5. Westyn Hughes, 9.7; 6. Riley Pruitt, 12.2; 7. Michael Otero, 14.0; no other qualified times. **Average leaders:** 1. Tuf Cooper, 15.4 seconds on two runs; 2. Cooper Martin, 16.6; 3. Westyn Hughes, 18.4; 4. Riley Pruitt, 20.2; 5. Tyler Milligan, 24.8; 6. Michael Otero, 25.4; 7. Ty Harris, 26.6; 8. Blane Cos, 8.9 seconds on one run; 9. Cody Craig, 10.3.

Barrel racing: Second round leaders: 1. Megan Champion, 14.28 seconds; 2. (tie) Kelly Bruner and Jimmie Smith, 14.36; 4. Keyla Polizello Costa, 14.44; 5. Sissy Winn, 14.45; 6. Sherry Cervi, 14.48; 7. McKenzie Morgan, 14.51; 8. Andrea Busby, 14.56; 9. Leia Pluemer, 14.57; 10. (tie) Mindy Goemmer and Stevie Perkins, 14.67.

Average leaders: 1. Megan Champion, 30.24 seconds on two runs; 2. Kelly Bruner, 30.28; 3. Keyla Polizello Costa, 30.62; 4. Andrea Busby, 30.67; 5. (tie) Sherry Cervi and Stevie Perkins, 30.81; 7. Sissy Winn, 30.85; 8. Mindy Goemmer, 30.86; 9. Cassidy Champlin, 30.89; 10. Jimmie Smith, 30.94; 11. McKenzie Morgan, 30.97; 12. Kellie Collier, 21.05.

Bull riding leaders: 1. Laramie Mosley, 89 points on Lancaster & Jones Pro Rodeo’s Final Rainbow; 2. Dakota Eagleburger, 84; 3. Gavin Michel, 80; 4. JW Griffin, 71; no other qualified rides.