

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo

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Johnson still riding high at 40

SAN ANGELO, Texas – Not many ProRodeo cowboys have a 20-year career, but Chet Johnson isn't a typical ProRodeo cowboy.

When he began his professional life as a bronc rider in 2001, the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo was a big event. He found it to his liking and had considerable success inside Foster Communications Coliseum in a short amount of time.

With the highs come the lows, and Johnson went through years without west Texas prosperity until it all changed in one eight-second ride Wednesday night during the ninth performance of the rodeo.

“This used to be a really good rodeo to me when I was in my early 20s, but it's been a real battle for me for a long time,” said Johnson, who rode Lancaster and Jones Pro Rodeo's Vertical Horizon for 87 points to take the saddle bronc riding lead. “When I say a long time, I mean it's been at least 15 years.

“It was one of the first three Texas rodeos I'd ever been to coming out of Wyoming. To be that disappointed for so many years in a row, and now to do good, it's an unbelievable feeling. If I can finish strong, it's going to mean even more.”

Thursday's 10th performance will host the final preliminary rounds for the competitors, and only the top 12 advance to Friday's championship round. He is excited to be part of that performance and be in a good place to claim his first San Angelo title.

“With us still being in a funny type of year with COVID, a good check here and a win would be really good,” said Johnson, 40, of Douglas, Wyoming, now living most of the year in Stephenville, Texas. “This is going to be a big paycheck, and it helps set us up for the spring run and the summer run.

“This gives you the confidence and the money to keep going down the road, and it's something to build on.”

There's quite a bit to build on, because he didn't look his age on the back of Vertical Horizon. The powerful horse threw some moves at the veteran cowboy, who has four qualifications to the National Finals Rodeo on his resume.

“He tested me those first three jumps,” he said. “I had to bear down right out of the chute, but then he got super fun to ride and stacked up. He is just the kind of horse you need at this caliber of rodeo.

“A lot of guys have been trying to figure that horse out, and I finally got what you need to give him as far as rein. That helped me, and the experience of the other guys who have been on him or seen him a bunch. He’s going to be a good horse for a long time.”

By the time they reach 40, many bronc riders have been long retired. That’s not on Johnson’s mind ... at least for now. Over the last two decades, he’s missed time with injuries; in fact, he missed much of the 2018 and ’19 campaigns because of knee issues.

This season, he sits 23rd in the world standings thanks in large part to considerable success when the campaign began . He’s ridden through a rough stretch of luck for several weeks leading up to his ride in San Angelo. He’s been through the roller coaster of rodeo so many times before that he takes a solid approach to playing the game he loves.

“A lot of it’s more on the mental side of it,” Johnson said. “I’m just enjoying it and realize I don’t have a lot of years left. I’m going to enjoy going to rodeos I get to now and enjoy being around the other guys. We have a lot of younger bronc riders, too, and they help keep me young.

“Part of it is just sitting back and enjoying it and going back to why you started doing this.”

There have been times where the injuries and the all-night drives wore on the cowboy, but he has always plugged along. He’s known for his infectious smile and a good outlook on life, and it still shows in his riding.

“I worked my butt off to get my second knee rehabbed,” he said. “It got healed up, but it took seven months to get back to normal. Finally, everything settled itself down. I think the work I put in earlier might be paying off.

“I definitely want to make the NFR again. If I keep drawing these types of horses and keep riding good, I think it’s definitely could happen this year. After the year is over, I’ll sit down and really think about it. I know I’m toward the end of my career, but I still love doing this.”

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April 9-23

Bareback riding leaders: 1. Cole Franks, 88 points on Macza Pro Rodeo’s Hot Flash; 2. (tie) Tilden Hooper and Zach Hibler, 87; 4. Caleb Bennett, 86.5; 5. Tim O’Connell, 86; 6. Chad Rutherford, 85.5; 7. (tie) Luke Creasy and Garrett Shadbolt, 85; 9. Kaycee Field, 84.5; 10. Cauy Pool, 84; 11. Kody Lamb, 83; 11. (tie) Tanner Aus, Bill Tutor, Jamie Howlett and Hunter Carter, 82.

Steer wrestling: First round leaders: 1. Jesse Brown, 3.4 seconds, \$4,529; 2. (tie) Brandon Harrison, Jacob Edler and Jacob Talley, 3.5, \$3,348 each; 5. (tie) Dakota Eldridge, Gavin Soileau and Kalane Anders, 3.6, \$1,575 each; 8. (tie) Tyler Waguespack and Cody Devers, 3.7, \$197 each. **Second round leaders:** 1. (tie) Tyler Pearson and Kyle Irwin, 3.6; 3. T.J. Hall, 3.7; 4. (tie) Jay Williamson, Cody Moore, Gavin Soileau, Termaine Debose and Cody Harmon, 3.8 seconds. **Average leaders:** 1. Gavin Soileau, 7.4 seconds on two runs; 2. Jacob Talley, 7.8; 3. (tie) Jesse Brown, Jacob Edler and Cade Stanton, 8.0; 6. (tie) Taz Olson and Nick Guy, 8.1; 8. (tie) Shane Frey, Billy Boldon and Ryan McKay Nettle, 8.2; 11. (tie) Cody Devers, Remy Parrott and Tory Johnson, 8.3.

Team roping: First round leaders: 1. (tie) Jake Orman/Brye Crites and John Gaona/Trevor Nowlin, 3.9 seconds, \$4,174 each; 3. Coy Rahlmann/Douglas Rich, 4.0, \$3,300; 4. (tie) Cody Snow/Wesley Thorp and

Chad Masters/Joseph Harrison, 4.2, \$2,427 each; 6. (tie) Clay Smith/Jade Corkill, Cooper White/Tucker White and Kaleb Driggers/Junior Nogueira, 4.3, \$971 each. **Second round leaders:** 1.(tie) Dustin Egusquiza/Travis Graves and Cyle Denison/Brady Norman, 3.5; 3. (tie) Clay Tryan/Jake Long and Andrew Ward/Buddy Hawkins, 3.6; 5. Jr. Dees/Rich Skelton, 3.7; 6. Erich Rogers/Paden Bray, 3.8; 7. Clint Summers/Rosh Ashford, 3.9; 8. (tie) Kal Fuller/Coleby Payne and Wyatt Muggli/Casey McCleskey, 4.0. **Average leaders:** 1. Jake Orman/Brye Crites, 8.2 seconds on two runs; 2. Clay Tryan/Jake Long, 8.4; 3. Coy Rahlmann/Douglas Rich, 9.5; 4. Clay Smith/Jade Corkill, 8.6; 5. Aaron Tsinigine/Kyle Lockett, 8.9; 6. Cooper White/Tucker White, 9.0; 7. Cody Snow/Wesley Thorp, 9.4; 8. Brenten Hall/Chase Tryan, 10.0; 9. Cory Clark/Wyatt Cox, 10.8; 10. Jaguar Terrill/Sid Sporer, 11.0; 9. Wyatt Muggli/Casey McCleskey, 13.8; 11. Dustin Egusquiza/Travis Graves, 12.5; 12. Chad Masters/Joseph Harrison, 13.6.

Saddle bronc riding leaders: 1. Chet Johnson, 87 points on Lancaster & Jones Pro Rodeo's Vertical Horizon; Kolby Wanchuck, 86; 3. Jacobs Crawley, 84; 4. (tie) Cort Scheer, Isaac Diaz, Jarrod Hammons and Lefty Holman, 83.5; 8. (tie) Allen Boore, Chase Brooks and Sage Newman, 83; 11. Lucas Macza, 82.5; 12. Cash Michael Wilson, 82.

Tie-down roping: First round leaders: 1. Tuf Cooper, 7.3 seconds, \$6,353; 2. Bradley Bynum, 7.5, \$5,525; 3. Tanner Green, 7.6, \$4,696; 4. Shad Mayfield, 7.7, \$3,867; 5. Reid Zapalac, 7.9, \$3,039; 6. Riley Pruitt, 8.0, \$2,910; 7. (tie) Kincade Henry, Beau Cooper, Seth Cooke and J.D. McCuiston, 8.1, \$483 each. **Second round leaders:** 1. Haven Meged, 7.2 seconds; 2. Sy Felton, 7.4; 3. Clint Robinson, 7.8; 4. Cooper Martin, 8.0; 5. (tie) Tuf Cooper and Caleb Smidt, 8.1; 7. Trent Creager, 8.2; 8. Colten Wallis, 8.3. **Average leaders:** 1. Tuf Cooper, 15.4 seconds on two runs; 2. Cooper Martin, 16.6; 3. Seth Cooke, 17.1; 4. Shad Mayfield, 17.3; 5. Garrett Jacobs, 17.4; 6. (tie) Jake Booze and Beau Cooper, 18.0; 8. Chance Thiessen, 18.2; 9. (tie) John Clark and Sy Felton, 18.3; 11. Westyn Hughes, 18.4; 12. Reese Riemer, 18.5.

Barrel racing: Second round leaders: 1. Dona Kay Rule, 14.17 seconds; 2. (tie) Michelle Alley and Lacinda Rose, 14.22 seconds; 4. Jordon Briggs, 14.24; 5. Cheyenne Wimberley, 14.27; 6. (tie) Megan Champion and Stephanie Fryar, 14.28; 8. (tie) Bristan Kennedy and Kassie Mowry, 14.32; 8. Alex Lang, 14.35. **Average leaders:** 1. Dona Kay Rule, 30.08 seconds on two runs; 2. Cheyenne Wimberley, 30.15; 3. Megan Champion, 30.24; 4. Kelly Bruner, 30.28; 5. Jordon Briggs, 30.32; 6. Kassie Mowry, 30.41; 7. Bristan Kennedy, 30.43; 8. Shelley Morgan, 30.45; 9. Stephanie Fryar, 30.47; 10. Michelle Alley, 30.49; 11. Kenna Squires, 30.52; 12. Randee Prindle, 30.55.

Bull riding leaders: 1. Boudreaux Campbell, 92.5 points on Pete Carr Pro Rodeo's Oyster Bayou; 2. Laramie Mosley, 89; 3. (tie) Trey Benton III and Sage Kimzey, 88; 5. Jace Trosclair, 87; 6. Wyatt Gregg, 86.5; 7. Maverick Potter, 86; 8. Shawn Bennett Jr., 85.5; 9. Joao Veiera, 85; 10. (tie) Josh Frost and Chris Bechtold and Tyler Bingham, 84.5.