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For the St. Paul Rodeo

RODEO CENTRAL

St. Paul Rodeo to host nearly 650 cowboys, cowgirls

St. Paul, Ore. (June 27, 2022) – The Independence Day holiday means celebration time for the nation, and in St. Paul, Oregon, the party involves rodeo.

Dubbed “the Nation’s Greatest Fourth of July Rodeo,” the St. Paul Rodeo kicks off June 30 and runs through July 4, with nearly 650 cowboys and cowgirls descending on St. Paul, to compete for the prize buckle and cash winnings.

Among those rodeo contestants are veterans and rookies, world champs and the competitors who rodeo as a hobby.

For bareback rider Austin Foss, St. Paul is a special place.

He’s won the bareback riding at the rodeo twice (2021, 2014) and it’s where his wife, Bridget Ryan Foss, served on the 2012 St. Paul Royal Court.

Foss, Terrebonne, Ore., has qualified for the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo four times in his career (2013-2015, 2019) but his rodeo competition has been slowed this year, due to a back injury.

He has two herniated disks, L4 and L5, and “my joints are a bit rusty,” he said. Bareback riding “is fun to do but it will wear on a guy,” he quipped.

Cortisone shots have helped, and he’s hoping to kick off his rodeo season with Cowboy Christmas, the rodeos surrounding the Fourth of July, run. Foss is currently ranked in the top fifty in the PRCA world standings.

Another bareback rider, Cooper Cano, is just getting his start in the sport.

Cano, of Carlton, Oregon, is in his first year of PRCA competition.

He got his first taste of the sport while riding at the junior rodeos held in St. Paul, when he was nine years old.

He attended the St. Paul Rodeo as a kid with his family, mom Kim Cooper and dad Gabriel Cano. “I grew up watching that rodeo, going to every performance,” he said. That’s what gave him the bug to rodeo, in addition to watching the PBR bull riding on TV.

He’s a first-generation rodeo competitor. In high school, he competed in the bareback riding, saddle bronc riding and team roping and qualified for the National High School Finals Rodeo twice.

Now, at nineteen years old, he's just finished his freshman year at Odessa (Texas) College, competing collegiately.

Cano credits his mom for encouraging him to rodeo. "She's super supportive, one of my biggest fans," he said. "She's trucked me up and down the road these last couple of years."

Cano loves St. Paul. "It's where I watched live action rodeo for the first time. It's a special place for me and my family."

World champion tie-down roper Haven Meged won the St. Paul Rodeo last year and returns to defend his tie-down roping title.

The Miles City, Montana man is ranked sixth nationwide in his event, and St. Paul will be one stop among many for Cowboy Christmas. He and his rig will be in Prescott, Ariz. on June 28; Oakley, Utah June 29; take an all-night drive to St. Paul for competition on June 30, then Cody Wyoming July 1; Ponoka, Alberta July 2, and Red Lodge and Livingston, Montana on July 4.

He's aboard a six-year-old sorrel gelding named Smoke who is new to the rodeo trail. His horse last year, Beyonce, is in the breeding barn but will be back to the rodeo trail in Ponoka, where Meged will ride her.

Meged loves coming to St. Paul. "It's a heck of a rodeo with a lot of money added," he said. "It's a cool rodeo, a big arena with trees in it. Everybody wants to go there."

Six of the nine PRCA world champions are scheduled to be in St. Paul: all-around and saddle bronc rider Stetson Wright, Milford, Utah; bareback rider Kaycee Feild, Genola, Utah; tie-down roper Caleb Smidt, Bellville, Texas; and team ropers Kaleb Driggers, Hoboken, Georgia and Junior Nogueira, Presidente Prudente, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Returning to defend their 2021 St. Paul titles are Foss in the bareback riding and Meged in the tie-down roping; bull rider J.C. Mortensen, Paulden, Ariz.; saddle bronc rider Zeke Thurston, Big Valley, Alb.; reigning world champion team ropers Driggers and Nogueira, and barrel racer Stephanie Fryar, Waco, Texas.

The St. Paul Rodeo takes place this week and weekend, June 30-July 4, with performances nightly at 7:30 pm and a 1:30 pm matinee on July 4. Fireworks follow each night's rodeo. The annual St. Paul Fourth of July parade takes place at 10 am.

Fans are asked to purchase tickets early, as they are selling quickly. Fans are also asked to purchase only from the St. Paul Rodeo website; third party sellers' tickets cannot be guaranteed to be valid.

Tickets are available online at StPaulRodeo.com and at the gate. They range in price from \$20 to \$26.

For more information, visit the website or call 800.237.5920.

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Cutlines:

Oregon's own Austin Foss is the 2021 St. Paul Rodeo bareback riding champion. He returns to defend his title at this year's rodeo June 30-July 4. Photo by Hoot Creek.

Haven Meged, the reigning world champion and St. Paul champion, ropes at last year's St. Paul Rodeo. Photo by Hoot Creek.

Cooper Cano, Carlton, Ore., is just beginning his rodeo career. He attended the St. Paul Rodeo as a child. Photo by Ashley Kendall Photography.