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Chisholm Trail Ram Prairie Circuit Finals Rodeo

PrairieCircuitFinals.com

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RELEASE DATE: Sept. 6, 2023

Rodeo elite coming to Duncan

DUNCAN, Okla. – In sports, there is always a battle to be victorious.

In rodeo, the levels of success vary from one day to another. Winning doesn't always define greatness; sometimes getting close is valuable in more than horseshoes and hand-grenades. A series of second-place finishes can be more instrumental to a player's season than a single win over that same stretch.

Why?

Because money equals points in rodeo. The top 15 contestants on the money list at the end of the regular season advance to the National Finals Rodeo, where the world champions will be crowned. Those 10 December nights in Las Vegas are where every rodeo cowboy and cowgirl dreams to be. In the region made up of Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska, the very best will get a jump start on their bids to win this year's Montana Silversmiths gold buckles.

Before they ride in the Nevada desert, the region's elite will battle for titles closer to home at the Chisholm Trail Ram Prairie Circuit Finals Rodeo, set for 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 12-Saturday, Oct. 14, at the Stephens County Arena in Duncan.

While there, they will compete for Prairie Circuit titles, and the year-end and finals-aggregate champions will advance on to the national circuit finals, now dubbed the NFR Open and set to take place next July in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Make no mistake, though; this isn't just a hometown event. The circuit finale is a chance to see many of the greatest players in professional rodeo while also getting a glimpse of the sport's future.

"We like to tell folks that they're going to see world champions or eventual world champions when they come to our rodeo," said Joe Henderson, chairman of the committee that produces the circuit finale in Duncan every fall. "When you look at the history of the Prairie Circuit, you can see a great line of world champions who are from this part of the country.

"If we look at Oklahoma alone, this is where the Etbauer brothers lived during most of their careers. This is home to Sage Kimzey and Terry Don West. Oklahoma is home to the Duvalls and Ote Berry. We have hall-of-famers from here, and that doesn't include the champions from Kansas and Nebraska like Jeffrey Collins and Dean Gorsuch. We have a great legacy of rodeo."

That history will repeat itself during this year's spectacular, held over three nights in southern Oklahoma. There are men and women fighting for circuit titles while also in the mix to compete at the NFR in a couple months.

That includes Jayco Roper, the 11th-ranked bareback rider in the world standings and a regular fixture at the Stephens County Arena each October; Cody Devers, who is 11th in the bulldogging race; team ropers Andrew Ward, Jake Clay, Coleman Proctor, Buddy Hawkins and Logan Medlin; barrel racers Emily Beisel, Wenda Johnson and Paige Jones; breakaway ropers Taylor Munsell and Cheyanne Guillory; and bull riders Creek Young and Trey Kimzey.

Steer roping features a handful of top hands, including the No. 1 man in the standings, Cole Patterson, and his world-champion father, Rocky; Billy Good and Mike Chase. There are also a handful

of others who still have a chance to qualify for the Clem McSpadden National Finals Steer Roping, set for Nov. 17-18 in Mulvane, Kansas.

“Those are just the contestants who are in the top 15 as of early September; there are plenty of others who have either been to the NFR or may be able to jump into the top 15 by the time the regular season comes to an end the end of this month,” Henderson said. “Stockton Graves has won our circuit and our circuit finals, and he has a great chance to go back to the NFR.

“That’s the kind of stuff that makes rodeo fun, and it’s why we’re excited to have that kind of competition right here in Stephens County.”