

News Release
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1. Sartain, VonAhn take San Antonio team roping title

SAN ANTONIO – If a cowboy wants to put a tough season behind him, San Antonio is the spot to make it happen, and Nick Sartain and Kollin VonAhn did just that at the AT&T Center on Saturday night.

The 2009 world champions won the short round at the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo – a Wrangler Million Dollar Gold Tour event – with a 4.2-second run to push their rodeo earnings to \$19,323 apiece and get their 2012 seasons off to a great start.

“It was about time for us to win something good, I thought. We were due,” Sartain said. “We had kind of a tough time last year. I didn’t rope as well as I thought I should have last summer, and we had some trouble and didn’t make the Finals. I was ready to win something, and this is a great place to do it. It seems like we’ve turned it around this year. It’s been real good so far, we’ve been blessed.”

Even before their winning run, Sartain and VonAhn had already banked close to \$7,000, which gave them no reason to believe that good things were not in store for them in the final round.

“This is one of my favorite rodeos,” VonAhn said. “We’ve never won this rodeo, but it seems like every time we’ve come here, we’ve done pretty well, so my confidence is high when I come here.”

The other big bonus for Sartain, VonAhn and all the event winners were the \$5,000 gas cards awarded by the San Antonio committee, something that could become a major asset when it’s time to hit the road hard in the summer.

“If you’ve bought any fuel lately, you know it’s high,” Sartain said. “It’s really nice for us to win two of them, because we travel together quite a bit.”

Bull rider Cody Teel completed an outstanding day in San Antonio with what has to be considered the biggest win of his professional career after riding D&H Cattle’s Priceless for 90 points. The 19-year-old and reigning College National Finals Rodeo bull riding champion finished second in the PRCA Xtreme Bulls event earlier in the day, and he left the AT&T Center with a combined \$34,987 between the two events.

For tie-down roper Justin Maass, a 7.4-second run in the final preliminary round pushed him to the semifinals, and he only picked up steam from there. After earning checks in each of his two semifinal runs,

another 7.4-second run edged reigning World Champion Tuf Cooper by four-tenths of a second and brought Maass his first San Antonio title.

In a tough bareback riding competition, the top four cowboys were separated by just two points. Steven Dent and Will Lowe each put up 88-point rides in the short round to win matching \$10,889 checks, but Dent won the rodeo based on his total earnings in San Antonio (\$17,030).

The steer wrestling was another hotly contested race, with Ethen Thouvenell edging Shane Henderson and six-time Linderman Award winner Kyle Whitaker by a tenth of a second. Thouvenell, who qualified for his first Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in 2010, hopes to use the \$17,112 from San Antonio to help him make a return trip to Las Vegas.

Another cowboy hoping to get back to Sin City is saddle bronc rider Chet Johnson. The Sheridan, Wyo., cowboy was the second-highest money winner at the San Antonio Rodeo with \$19,077, and he put an exclamation point on it with his 86-point ride on Calgary Stampede's Knight Rocket. It is the 2009 Canadian champion's first win in San Antonio.

Angie Meadors won the barrel racing with a time of 13.87 seconds and left San Antonio with \$18,340 in total earnings.

2. Cousins collect big checks in San Angelo

SAN ANGELO, Texas – Tate and Dakota Kirchenschlager entered the finals of the San Angelo Rodeo in a tie for third place in the average, but on Saturday afternoon the pair of cousins vaulted themselves to the top spot.

The Texas team ropers posted a time of 4.8 seconds in the finals, which was good enough for second – behind Clay Tryan and Travis Graves (4.7) – earning each \$1,434.

But the run resulted in more than just a second-place check; it also gave them the average title by six-tenths of a second over Tryan and Graves. The resulting payoff for the average title was \$5,479 for each of the cousins.

“We just wanted to go out and rope our way,” Dakota said. “Tate heads really well and he gets the rope on them as soon as he gets out there. This win helps our confidence a lot, but we know it's a long road ahead of us and one big win doesn't get you anywhere.”

Tate was happy with the haul the pair earned on Saturday, and says it will help to have a big check in their pockets.

“This will give us some money to go down the road with, which is nice,” Tate said. “It's a big step for us heading forward.”

The other winners at San Angelo were bareback rider Wes Stevenson (170 points on two head), steer wrestler Olin Hannum (15.1 seconds on four head), saddle bronc rider Wade Sundell (174 points on two head), tie-down roper Cory Solomon (35.7 seconds on four head), barrel racer Brittany Pozzi (44.32 seconds on three runs) and bull rider Nevada Newman (89 points).

3. Lowe beats star-studded field for Tucson title

TUCSON, Ariz. – Will Lowe is an accomplished, three-time bareback riding world champion, but days like Sunday have to make him smile a little wider.

Lowe beat out a field that included many of the event's biggest names, winning the finals with an 89-point ride on Beutler & Son Rodeo's Hollywood Hills, and netting \$1,650.

As a result, Lowe, who took second place in the first round with an 85, took home the average title with a score of 174 points on two head. His average score was five points better than Kaycee Feild and Tilden Hooper, who tied for second.

“I just had a better day than those other guys did,” Lowe said. “You really never know what's going to happen in this event and it's like the movie *Any Given Sunday*, where any of us can go out and win it.”

Lowe, who also tied for the win in the short round at San Antonio, hauled in a total of \$8,305 in Tucson alone.

“I was fortunate to be on top today and I just think the quality of bareback riders is extremely high and it's a great event to compete in,” he said.

Other winners in Tucson included steer wrestler Ethan Thouvenell (19.0 seconds on three head), team ropers Erich Rogers and Kory Koontz (21.3 seconds on three head), saddle bronc rider Wade Sundell (172 points on two head), tie-down roper Ryan Jarrett (45.3 seconds on four head), barrel racer Reiney Hatch (52.53 seconds on three runs) and bull rider Cody Samora (90 points on one head).

4. Asay's comeback gets a jolt at San Antonio Xtreme Bulls

SAN ANTONIO – To say that Kanin Asay dominated the highest-paying Xtreme Bulls in the event's history in San Antonio on Saturday just might be an understatement.

The Powell, Wyo., resident didn't just win the championship, he won both rounds along the way. He started by winning the first round with an 89-point effort on Classic Pro Rodeo's White Liar, which earned him the first-place check of \$8,789 and the top qualifying spot in the final round.

In the finals, he drew a familiar bull, D & H Cattle Company's Lil Moody. Asay had the bull in the third round of the first bracket in the rodeo and rode him for 83 points.

"I was pretty excited to get on him again," Asay said. "He had exactly the same trip today as he did before. I had to focus and just ride him jump for jump."

The judges liked Saturday's performance better and gave Asay 91 points. He was one of only two riders to last eight seconds in the finals and earned the championship with a total score of 180 points. That was worth \$28,704 of the \$100,000 purse.

Asay spent most of 2011 at home after having hip surgery last June. Before he got on his first bull on New Year's Eve, he started riding horses bareback to regain his balance and get in shape.

While he was unable to compete, like many other injured rodeo contestants, he relied on the Justin Cowboy Crisis Fund to help pay his living expenses. He and his wife, Sydney, have a 5-month-old son named Kasen.

"If it wasn't for the Justin Cowboy Crisis Fund, I wouldn't be here right now," he said. "I'd be working and taking care of my family. God has allowed great people to donate to the fund, and it's helped me personally, as well as many of my friends."

Finishing second behind Asay was Cody Teel. He had a total of 161 points to win \$18,612.

Three-time world champion J.W. Harris from Mullin, Texas, was third with an 87.5-point finish from the first round of competition on Classic Pro Rodeo's Casino. Harris earned \$14,476, which will certainly help him in a quest for a Wrangler National Finals Rodeo qualification as he is expected to miss the next four months of competition. Harris was treated on-site by the Justin Sportsmedicine Team and is scheduled to have knee surgery Feb. 29.

5. Tierney beats strong field at San Antonio steer roping

SAN ANTONIO – Fifty of the best steer ropers in the world squared off at the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo on Feb. 26 to do battle over shares of the biggest steer roping payoff of the regular season.

[Jess Tierney](#), a 29-year-old all-around cowboy from Hermosa, S.D., emerged the champion of the 2012 event, winning the three-head average and a pretty grand total of \$13,551 in 34.9 seconds.

Riding his good friend C.A. Lauer's horse, Tierney was the model of consistency. An 11.8-second run earned him a seventh-place check for \$1,382 in the first go-round, which was won by Kim Ziegelgruber, who turned in a 10.8-second run.

An 11.4-second run was one-tenth of a second too long to place in the second round – which defending champion Trevor Brazile claimed by recording the fastest run of the day at 9.1 seconds – but put Tierney in the lead on two head going into the final round.

Roping last in the final round of 18 ropers – which included Hall of Famers Roy Cooper and Guy Allen, as well as all three of the steer roping members of the Fisher family, Dan and sons Vin and J. Tom – Tierney needed a 12.3-second time to secure the victory.

He made a solid 11.7-second run to split fifth- and sixth-place money with Brazile in the round and finish seven-tenths of a second in front of Ziegelgruber to win the average. The final-round first-place check went to Cody Lee of Gatesville, Texas, with a time of 9.8 seconds.

Tierney, who qualified for his first Clem McSpadden National Finals Steer Roping in 2011, had been focusing his efforts on team roping in 2012, but admitted the win might have him re-evaluating his plans.

“This is such a great rodeo. I’ve always wanted to win San Antonio, and I got a chance today,” Tierney said. “I haven’t been steer roping as much so far this year. I just planned to enter San Antonio and a few of the other good ones. I’ve got a real good team roping partner, Jace Crabb, and I’ve been focusing more on that event. I might have to enter a few more rodeos in the steer roping now.

“San Antonio has a way of changing a lot of guys’ minds about their plans for the year. A good buddy of mine, C.A. Lauer, let me borrow his good horse (“Shep”, the 2007 PRCA/American Quarter Horse Association Steer Roping Horse of the Year) to come down here. He’s just an awesome horse, and I just can’t say enough about C.A. and Buster Record. I lived up there in Oklahoma with them for a while, and they’ve been really good to me.”

6. Other weekend highlights

From Sinton, Texas:

- Trevor Brazile and wife Shada both came out winners at the San Patricio County Pro Rodeo. Trevor took the average in the steer roping with a time of 36.6 seconds on three head, while Shada won the barrel racing with a time of 17.32 seconds.

- Other champions from Sinton were all-around cowboy Bobby Joe Hill, bareback rider Ethan Crouch, steer wrestler Michael Stanley, team ropers Bobby Joe Hill and Rusty Barnett, saddle bronc rider Rhys Angland, tie-down roper Tyler Prcin and bull rider Matthew Hernandez.

From Perry, Ga.:

- Justin Thigpen won the tie-down roping and placed third in the steer wrestling to take home all-around cowboy honors and a total of \$2,012.

- Visit www.prorodeo.com for complete results of all PRCA-sanctioned rodeos.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“That’s the third time I’ve gotten on that horse, and each time I keep getting a better score,” Sundell said. “That’s probably one of the greatest horses that you can get on a draw. I was glad to put up a good score and win the old rodeo.

“I’ve never done any good in San Angelo, but I won the long round and the short round and the average, so it’s pretty cool.”

– Wade Sundell talking about Burch Rodeo’s Lunatic Fringe

By Kim Gierke for the San Angelo (Texas) Standard-Times

8. News and notes from the rodeo trail

An online auction conducted through Facebook raised \$123,385 for an educational trust fund to benefit the children of **Cam** and **Wade Cooper**, the brothers of 2011 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo barrelman **CrAsh Cooper**. Cam and Wade Cooper were killed in a plane crash in July 2011 and each left behind a wife and three children. “It gives us comfort to have witnessed so many beautiful acts come from such a devastating situation,” Cooper wrote on Facebook. “Cam and Wade never touched anyone’s life lightly. If you met them, you were not soon to forget them.” ... The estimated economic impact – including lodging, food and fuel – from visitors to this year’s San Angelo (Texas) Rodeo was \$4.2 million, according to **Pamela Miller**, vice president of the San Angelo Convention & Visitors Bureau ... The proposed Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center – which would serve as the new home for the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston, Ore. – has \$12.8 million in hard assets to complete the project. The Umatilla County Commissioners held a public hearing Feb. 15, to gauge local support for tax initiatives that may be needed to complete the deal. If fully realized, the trade and event center would cost an estimated \$31.5 million. “It would be \$22.5 million to create the “essential fair and rodeo scope,” says County Commissioner **Larry Givens** ... Several members of the PRCA specialty act **Riata Ranch Cowboy Girls** have been selected to perform for the Queen of England at Windsor Castle. The Diamond Jubilee Pageant – a celebration of Queen Elizabeth’s 60-year reign – is set to take place in May with 54 countries being represented, including 800 performers and 500 horses. The Cowboy Girls are participating in the United States segment, portraying early 1900’s Western ranching life ... Rodeo is at the very top of CNN’s

list of 10 Classic American Experiences (<http://tinyurl.com/777dnx9>), ahead of taking a road trip on Route 66, a Civil War reenactment and NASCAR ... The San Antonio Spurs might not want the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo to end. The team went 8-1 on its annual "Rodeo Road trip," in which it has to play away from home during the 16-day rodeo ... Country music star **Alan Jackson** broke a San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo attendance record on Feb. 23. Rodeo officials said Jackson broke the all-time attendance record since the beginning of the rodeo in 1950 with nearly 17,000 fans in attendance ... The San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo once again raised money to help provide scholarships for rodeo students in 2012. The rodeo has raised more than \$113 million that has been given to rodeo students, including \$9.5 million in 2011 alone.