

7th Annual Rising Stars Calf Roping

"You only achieve what you believe" is the motto of Rising Stars Jr. Calf Roping producers Chris Neal and Mark Holder. They believed that by making some major changes in the format of the roping they could achieve the best roping possible. And it proved to be true that sometimes change is good! For the first time in seven years an extra day was added to the schedule, making the Rising Stars Jr. Calf Roping a four day event. And the biggest decision to change the location to Duncan, Oklahoma was definitely a good one.

Once again much thought and preparation went into the awards that were given to the winners in each age group. Six beautifully designed hand-tooled Twister saddles were awarded to each Average winner. Lankford Leather & Tack once again transformed the rope cans that were donated by Smith Bros. Roping Supplies into awesome cans that went to each Fastest Calf winner. And last but not least, Hogg Saddles of Conway, Arkansas designed and crafted the award winning saddle for the winner of the All-Star Calf Roping.

Continuing a tradition, Barry Burk, producer of the Barry Burk Jr. Roping, donated a saddle to the youngest Tie Down Roper. Five year old Tanner Baker of Alvord, Texas proved that big things come in small packages when he tied down a calf in the 12 & Under Tie-Down roping to win the saddle. Before the presentation of the saddle, Tanner's mom and dad had to do a cartwheel in the middle of the arena because he had bet them he would win!! The youngest Breakaway saddle was donated by Lonnie Gray of Master Saddles. Following in the footsteps of his older brother and his dad, Mason Theriot of Poplarville, Mississippi roped like a pro to win the youngest Breakaway saddle! Congratulations to both of these young ropers. See you again next year!!

If you think you can't have a great roping and Thanksgiving dinner all on the same day, think again!! The most delicious meal, with all the trimmings, could be bought through the concession stand prior to the All-Star Calf Roping.

The roping started at 2 p.m. with 77 of the most talented ropers from across the United States. Several of the NFR finalists made the Rising Stars Calf Roping a last stop before heading on to Las Vegas for the finals. Some of the lineup included Houston Hutto, Hunter Herrin, Tuf Cooper, Blair Burk, Ryan Jarrett, Monty Lewis, Ricky Canton and many more. The All-Star roping consisted of three full rounds and a shoot-out, with each round paying a total of \$6,416.00 and the average paying out \$9,624.00. (See results on next pages). The big share of the pie went to Brady Brock of Ponder, Texas when he placed second in the first go and won the average with a total time of 26.0 on three head.

To make the Shoot-Out, the first and second place winners in each of the three rounds, and the top six in the Average became the final twelve to rope for the top four positions. After the first round, the field was narrowed to the top eight. Then came the top four: Blair Burk, Tuf Cooper, Hunter Herrin and Cody Curry. But when the dust settled, it was Hunter Herrin who prevailed, winning the much coveted and sought-after prize, the Hogg saddle.

Friday morning started at 8:00 a.m. with 55 12 & Under Tie-Down ropers. Case Jones of Gatesville, Texas won the first round with a time of 12.0 seconds to start off the day. In the second round Marcus Theriot from Poplarville, Ms, turned in a time of 12.8 to win the second go. Reid Zapalac and Cole Watkins split the third round with a time of 12.5, and Tyler Milligan won the short go with an 11.8 seconds. In the average, Cooper Martin and Quinton Inman were hot on the heels of Case Jones, but Case won the average and the beautiful Twister saddle.

The 13-15 Tie-Down immediately followed the first roping, and Kyler Bramhall of Paris, Texas blitzed the first round with a time of 8.9 seconds. Catfish Brown from Collinsville, Texas won the second round with a 9.0 and Anthony Jordan from Houston, Texas dominated the third round with an 8.8. These boys didn't slow down when Rooster Hodge won the short round with an 8.6 second run. But a Kiln, Mississippi cowboy, Riley Grisham, beat out 66 other 13-15 Tie-Down ropers to win the average and the trophy saddle.

Seventy-nine 12 & Under Breakaway girls and boys were up bright and early Saturday morning ready to set the pace for the day. Reid Zapalac of Smithville, Texas won the first round with a time of 2.64 seconds. In the second round, times got even faster as Aubrey Waddle of New Waverly, Texas turned in a time of 2.47. But the third round proved to be an even faster go as Kolton White roped his calf in a time of 2.25 seconds. A Caldwell, Texas cowboy, Westyn Hughes, came out on top by winning the short round, the average and the saddle.

The last roping of the day started with 72 13-15 Breakaway ropers from several different states. Garrett Busby was in a hurry when he jumped out and won the first round with 2.07 seconds. Then Marty Yates got even faster by winning the second and third rounds with a 2.03 and 2.12 seconds. But Colton Roberts decided he would end the day in style when he won the short go and the fastest calf rope can with a time of 1.97. He came out number one in the average and took home the 13-15 Breakaway Twister saddle.

We were greeted Sunday morning by the Duncan Convention and Visitors Bureau with coffee, juice and doughnuts, and then we were blessed by having Rev. Roger Myers speak at our Cowboy Church Service. The 19 & Under Girls Breakaway started with 88 ropers and it was Hanna Wall of Ardmore, Ok., who won the first round with a time of 2.62. But Angela Bartley from Emporia, Kansas stayed strong and won the short go and the average and took home the trophy saddle. One of the beautifully hand-tooled rope cans for having the fastest time went to Megan Schrock of Rock Springs, Wyoming with a time of 2.19.

The last roping of the week-end started with 102 of the toughest 16-19 Tie-Down ropers west of the Mississippi. Chase Williams of Stephenville, Texas proved what fast was when he stuck it on one in 7.9 seconds to win the first round. The ropers in the second round came up with only two times, 8.4 turned in by J. D. McCuiston, James Collins, Matthew Love and Casey Harmon and 8.6 turned in by Bryce Murray and Cody Shelley. But the third go was fast and furious when Codie Poe and Blake Deckard stepped up the pace with 7.7 and 7.8 seconds. The short go was a near repeat of the second go with Cody Shelley and Blake Ash turning a time of 8.4 and Klay Kirkes and Rance Hays stopping the clock with an 8.6. But it was the average race that proved to be so exciting. Cody Shelley took the second place honors with a total time of 36.2, while Codie Poe bested him to win the average with a time of 36.1 seconds. The Provençal, Louisiana cowboy, Codie Poe, took home top honors when he tied the fastest calf in 7.7 seconds to win the rope can, placed in all but one round to win the average and was able to call one of the fully tooled Twister saddles his own.

To all those who followed us and supported us in this first year of change, Rising Stars Calf Roping producers, Chris Neal and Mark Holder, say a heartfelt "Thank You." It takes a lot of work and planning throughout the year to make this event possible, and because of you, the sponsors, suppliers, vendors, work crew, and our families who include the timers, secretaries and arena personnel, we couldn't do it without you. But most of all to the contestants and their families for your continued support of the Rising Stars Calf Roping, we say, "You only achieve what you believe," and we believe in the Rising Stars Calf Roping! See you in Duncan, America in 2009!!!

