

Herald Sports



Dent bucks the trend

Bareback, bronc rider
Steven Dent wins
all-around title at
Farm-City Pro Rodeo

By **ERIC SINGER**
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — More often than not, cowboys who win all-around titles at rodeos across the country do so with a mix of roping or steer wrestling events.

Nebraska cowboy Steven Dent is one of the few that buck that trend.

Dent captured the all-around championship and the coveted trophy saddle that comes with it as he finished tied for second in bareback and tied for third in saddle bronc after a pair of great rides during Thursday's performance. In bareback, Dent rode Zulu Warrior from the Calgary Stampede pen for 87 points, and then in bronc riding he took on Bookmark from Kesler Rodeo for 84.5 points.

"I knew I drew good coming in," Dent said after his bronc ride. "And I'd been riding good recently and usually that is a good combination."

Dent, from Mullen, Nebraska, earned a combined \$6,144 at Farm-City, which is the fourth all-around title for Dent this season, along with the Lexington (Kentucky) Rodeo, Roughrider Days Rodeo (Dickinson, North Dakota) and Kit Carson County Fair and Rodeo (Burlington, Colorado).

Steer wrestling

As Heppner native Blake Knowles prepared to make his run during Friday evening's performance at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo, announcer Randy Corley set the scene and built up the anticipation, trying to get the crowd cheering behind its hometown boy. Knowles already had a 3.4-second time from the afternoon slack, and another good time that night could put Knowles in contention for the bulldogging title.

As Knowles finally got settled with his horse, he nodded his head and the steer started to sprint out of the chute, but it didn't get too far before Knowles wrestled it to the ground in a fast 4.0 seconds. The time wasn't good enough for the \$100 nightly bonus or the top time of the round, but it was fast enough to jump Knowles into the lead of the average with a time of 7.4 on two head.

After the run, Knowles acknowledged he was a bit lucky for the time because the steer nearly got away from him.

"I had a steer tonight that I watched a good friend of mine, Sterling Lambert, run this afternoon and he (Lambert) missed him," Knowles said. "Sterling's a real good competitor and dang sure knows what he's doing, so I knew I had my work cut out for



Chase Brooks of Deer Lodge, Montana, rides Yesterdays Delivery for 87.5 points in saddle bronc riding on Saturday at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston.

STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

me. The steer's not bad to throw down, but he stops. And Hermiston's set up to go fast, so you gotta end up being able to see a little bit and catch one standing still out there, and that makes it a little tougher.

"But man, I was fortunate just to kind of make a plan and it worked out for me."

Knowles' time held up through Saturday to clinch the 2018 Farm-City title in steer wrestling. Along with the title comes a \$5,101 payout, which boosted Knowles up three spots in the world standings to 10th place as he tries to qualify for his fourth NFR and first since 2015.

Saddle bronc

Chase Brooks didn't know much about the bronc he drew beforehand, Yesterdays Delivery from the Calgary Stampede, but he quickly found out from his fellow riders that it was a "crazy good" horse, which got Brooks pumped up.

When it was finally Brooks'

turn to ride, Yesterdays Delivery leaped out of the chute and made a hard right turn towards the west end of the arena, bucking hard and doing everything it could to get Brooks off of its back. But Brooks hung on for an exceptional ride and was rewarded by the judges with 87.5 points that earned him the Farm-City saddle bronc championship.

"That horse bucked like hell," Brooks said with a big smile, "and she was electric. She kind of surprised me that first jump, she tail whipped me and I was kind of like 'Oh, I'm going to really have to catch up.' I had a feeling it was going to be quite a good (score) because I had to bust my butt to stay on her."

"But this is a cool rodeo and I'm glad to stay on one for the first time."

Brooks' score was just enough to overtake Kolby Wanchuk (85.5) for the title and earn a \$5,330 payout. That check is a huge boost for Brooks, a 24-year-old from Deer Lodge, Montana,

in his goal of a National Finals Rodeo berth, as it helped him move up one spot to 13th in the RAM World Standings.

Bareback riding

The bareback riding portion of Friday's performance was a short one.

With five riders withdrawing from the competition, it left only Orin Larsen and Kaycee Feild to make rides to start off the evening. And though the field was small, the cowboys did not disappoint. Feild started things off with an 83-point ride on Korkow Rodeo's Broken Angel, but Larsen followed with a massive 88.5 points on Calgary Stampede's Special Delivery — a horse that Larsen was very familiar with.

"I've been on that horse three or four years previous and it kind of made me look silly," Larsen said with a smile, "so I was happy to have it and get some redemption."

Larsen's score was enough to

win the rodeo and a \$5,330 payout. Redmond native Steven Peebles scored an 87-point ride on Saturday to finish tied for second with a \$3,657 paycheck, boosting him to 24th in the world standings.

Bull riding

It was a quiet night in bull riding on Friday as only two of the 11 riders were able to stay on for eight seconds for a qualified ride.

But the event saved the best for last.

Omak, Washington, native Wyatt Covington hopped on Corey and Lange's Hunky Dorie for the last ride of the night, and rode through all the twists and turns for 86.5 points. The ride gave Covington the top score of the night and helped him win the rodeo.

"That ride was a great feeling," said Covington, who gave a big fist pump to the crowd and tossed his helmet in celebration after the ride. "I've been on that bull before and I was really excited to get back on him again. It bucked me off the first time, so I wanted a little redemption and it worked out perfectly in my favor."

Barrel racing

In Wednesday night's performance, Jessie Telford of Caldwell, Idaho, completed Farm-City's course in 16.89 seconds — a time that was only eight one hundredths of a second off of the arena record. It was a time that appeared as if it would hold up to win the rodeo as rider after rider hit the course but couldn't break 17 seconds.

That was until Jennifer Barrett from Buhl, Idaho, turned in a time of 16.83 seconds — just two one hundredths of a second off the arena record — in slack later in the week to steal the win from Telford and earn a \$4,213 payout. Hermiston's Jordan Minor finished seventh in 17.19 seconds and Mary Shae Hayes was 15th.

Tie-Down Roping

Cimarron Boardman captured the tie-down roping title at Farm-City this year, but fans that attended the nightly performances did not get to see the champ in action.

Boardman completed both of his runs in slack, combining for 17.8 seconds on two head. Boardman, from Stephenville, Texas, roped his calf in 8.9 seconds for the second-best time in the first go round, and then tied it in 8.9 seconds in the second go to finish fifth in the round. His performances earned him a \$5,176 payday.

Redmond's Roger Nonella finished fourth with 19.9 seconds on two, while Stanfield's Seth Hopper was sixth with 20.7 seconds on two.

Team roping

Lane Ivy and Blaine Vick's

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Hometown barrel racer wins the day

By **BRETT KANE**
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston native Jordan Minor won Farm-City's barrel racing event on Thursday night, adding yet another accomplishment on her family's rodeo legacy.

Minor, 29, comes from a long line of rodeo competitors. Her mother, Maureen Crossley, is also an experienced barrel racer, and her father, Shane, has competed in tie-down roping and team roping.

But it doesn't end there. One of her younger sisters, Jade, 26, barrel races, and another, Callahan, 24, is competing in Canada this year, having qualified for

the Canadian finals in the past. She also has cousins involved: Blake Knowles of Heppner won steer wrestling at Farm-City and Mary Shae Hays regularly competes at Farm-City as a barrel racer.

"All my relatives do it," said Minor, 29. "It's all I've ever known."

Minor now lives in Ellensburg, Wash., with her 14-month-old daughter Monroe and her husband Riley, who — you guessed it — also competes in the rodeo.

In fact, it was the rodeo that brought the two together in the first place. The couple met as freshmen in high school when they toured rodeos during their summers off.

"We went to every rodeo together," she said.

They started dating when they were seniors in 2007 and married four years later. The rodeo lifestyle hasn't slowed down for either of them, however. Riley, 30, stands at No. 8 in the world in team roping, in which he competes alongside his brother Brady. He has qualified for the Wrangler National Finals four times and has won rodeos in Marwayne, Alberta; Bakersfield, California; and Coulee City, Washington, this year alone.

The two spend much of their time apart, touring the country and riding in rodeos from coast to coast between June and September.

"We're together in the winter and spring, but when the heat of the summer comes, we go our separate ways," Minor said. "We both grew up around rodeos; we're used to the different schedules."

She's raced in over 60 rodeos so far this year.

"You get tired of the long drives, but once you're in the arena, it's always exciting," she said.

Minor is currently at No. 3 in the Columbia River Circuit. Thursday, she finished off a nail-biting race on top, edging out Cheyenne Allan of Mabton, Washington, and Teri Bangart of Olympia, who hold the No. 1 and No. 2 spots, respectively.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC SINGER

Hermiston's Jordan Minor looks toward the announcer's stand after accepting her \$100 bonus and bottle of Chute 8 whiskey after recording the top barrel racing time in Thursday's performance of the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston.