MEDIA ALERT

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RODEO AUSTIN'S "RIDE FOR THE BRAND" COWBOY TOURNAMENT BRINGS BACK THE BEST FOR FINAL ROUND

Austin, Texas, March 28, 2015 – The past two weeks of ProRodeo have been exhilarating at Rodeo Austin. Every night has showcased true grit and talent in seven events – bareback riding, steer wrestling, team roping, saddle-bronc riding, tie-down roping, barrel racing and bull riding.

Rodeo Austin implemented a new format this year referred to as the "Ride for the Brand" Cowboy Tournament, composed of ten qualifying rounds, four playoff rounds and one final round. The bracket-style format makes spectating fun for rodeo fans, as they can identify a winner every night in each event.

A total of 560 contestants competed in the ten qualifying rounds, where the top four competitors in each event advanced to the Playoff rounds. The field narrowed from there in the playoff rounds, with the top two contestants in each event advancing.

The "Ride for the Brand" Cowboy Tournament culminated tonight with the Final Round, where the top 8 contestants from each event rode to be named this years' Champion. The Final Round paid out a total of $160,000, and each champion received a Rodeo Austin hot-iron brand.

Rodeo Austin paid out a total of $500,000 this year, ranking as the No. 5 ProRodeo. Tonight's Final Round showcased some of the best competition Rodeo Austin has seen so far.

Saddle Bronc rider from Keldron, South Dakota, Chuck Smidt, stuck it out for an 89 point ride, winning the round. His drawn horse, 570 Killer Bee, owned by Beutler & Son Rodeo Co., was 2013 Top Saddle Bronc at the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas and nominated for 2014 Saddle Bronc of the Year.

"Everybody knows that horse bucks hard," Smidt said. "I stayed awake till 4 a.m. last night thinking about this horse. He's strong and difficult to ride but I pulled it off."

Smidt is no stranger to Rodeo Austin; he has competed here the past five years making the short round multiple times.

"This is the first time I've been able to walk away a champion here and it feels great," Smidt said. "I love the hot-iron brand, that was a great idea and really cool."

Barrel racing was also jam-packed with great horses and fast runs on top of the ground tonight. Michelle McLeod of Collinsville, Texas was the last runner out and made a clean run to win the round with a 15.21 second ride.

"I am thrilled about tonight," McLeod said. "I really needed this win and I know I was competing against some great girls and horses tonight. My horse is typically a handful in the back so I was a little worried about being the last rider but she really took off and had a smoking run."

Seven contestants left the rodeo titled “Ride for the Brand” Champion tonight. Rodeo Austin looks forward to a bright future helping cowboys and cowgirls succeed in the sport of rodeo.

The results from tonight are as follows:

	Bareback Riding	**SCORE**
1	Clint Laye	88
2	Bobby Mote	84
3	Clint Cannon	83
3	Wes Stevenson	82
5	Joel Schlegel	81
6	Tanner Aus	76
7	Zachariah Phillips	No Score
8	Tyler Waltz	No Score

	Steer Wrestling	**TIME**
1	Casey Martin	4.4
2	Wade Sumpter	4.5
3	Chance Campbell	5.0
3	Seth Brockman	5.3
5	Nick Guy	5.5
6	Riley Duvall	14.4
7	Dakota Eldridge	No Time
8	John Franzen	No Time

	Team Roping	**TIME**
1	Derrick Begay Clay O'Brien Cooper	5.0
2	Tyler Waters Matt Kasner	5.4
3	Clay Tryan Jade Corkill	5.4
4	Josh Torres Jonathan Torres	14.8
5	Speed Williams Jett Hillman	No Score
6	Landon McClaugherty Justin Ambriz	No Score
7	Levi Simpson Jeremy Buhler	No Score
8	Caleb Smidt Mickey Gomez	No Score

Saddle Bronc	**Score**

1	Chuck Schmidt	89
2	Hardy Braden	86
2	Cody Wright	84
4	Clay Elliott	80
5	Andy Clarys	80
6	Tyler Corrington	No Score
7	Spencer Wright	No Score
8	Layton Green	No Score

Tie Down Roping		**TIME**
1	Randall Carlisle	8.0
2	Morgan Grant	8.0
2	K.C. Miller	8.4
4	Robert Mathis	8.4
5	Brady Brock	8.6
6	Reece Reimer	11.5
7	Jake Pratt	18.4
8	Michael Perry	No Time

Barrel Racing		**TIME**
1	Michele McLeod	15.21
2	Carley Richardson	15.29
3	Sherry Cervi	15.36
4	Romany Gordon	15.79
5	Trula Churchill	15.91
6	Sabrina Ketcham	15.91
7	Britany Diaz	20.71
8	Alexa Lake	25.38

Bull Riding		**SCORE**
1	Brock Russell	No Score
2	Jay Turner	No Score
3	McKennon Wimberly	No Score
4	Riker Carter	No Score
5	Cody Dollins	No Score
6	Bryce Barrios	No Score
7	Gutherie Murray	No Score
8	Chris Roundy	No Score

Miss Rodeo Austin, Chloe Costello, runs the American flag during the rodeo performance.

Nathan Twining rides his horse during the Youth Tribute at Rodeo Austin.

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