

## **NEW FORMAT WINS AT 2008 CLOVERDALE RODEO AND COUNTRY FAIR**

As the dust settled on the rodeo arena today in Cloverdale, British Columbia, the 62-year-old event rode into history. After 61 years of traditional rodeo it was announced last year in May, 2007 that the Cloverdale Rodeo would eliminate four traditional rodeo events, reorganize its program and re-launch this past long weekend in the boldest step anyone in the rodeo community has taken in the sport's long and proud history.

The decision, described by organizers as "heart-wrenchingly difficult," came after substantive soul-searching and debate, and set the small-town Cloverdale event alone, away from the 800 other traditional rodeos in North America. The result of the decision set off a firestorm amongst the world-wide rodeo community, and resulted in Cloverdale losing its sanctioning by both the Canadian and American rodeos' governing bodies. Without sanctioning Cloverdale is no longer a "points event," meaning the competitors no longer earn points towards the Canadian Finals Rodeo (CFR) and National Finals Rodeo (NFR) in Las Vegas.

"To keep the caliber of competitors high we needed to increase our payouts," says Rodeo Chairperson Penny Smythe.

Cloverdale increased its purse money from \$160,000 in 2007 to \$360,000 in 2008 – making it the second largest payout in Canada and fifth largest in North America.

With its prize money set to draw attention, the organization then re-organized the event into an invitational format, with the top 24 cowboys in each of the four main events – bull riding, saddle bronc and bareback riding and ladies barrel racing – invited to attend.

"It was a risk to move outside of traditional rodeo," says Symthe. "Although we respect the heritage of pro rodeo, for our event, in our community, it was the right decision. The only question for us was whether or not the top competitors would continue to attend if they couldn't earn points to CFR or NFR."

And come they did. Canadian Champions, current points leaders, World Champions. Across all four events, the 'Wayne Gretzky's' of the rodeo world turned out and put on a show that longtime rodeo enthusiasts described as one that will be remembered for years to come throughout the rodeo world.

"Spectacular doesn't describe what's happened here this weekend," says legendary rodeo announcer Bob Tallman.

Judges' scores, typically seen in the 70's for cowboys on a decent performance and in the 80's for exceptional, reached 91 a total of four times over the five performances.

“That is one for the books,” says Tallman. “I don’t remember ever seeing that in my career, and I’ve been working the biggest and best rodeos in the world for 40 years.”

Three of four days of blazing sunshine helped the Cloverdale Rodeo and Country Fair to big attendance for both the Country Fair and the Rodeo events. Over 80,000 guests attended the event, one of the biggest crowds in recent memory. Plans are now underway for the 2009 Cloverdale Rodeo and Country Fair, May 15 – 18, 2009.

### **Final Results:**

#### **Bareback Riding**

- 1) Bobby Mote of Culver, OR – 89 points (\$20,000)
- 2) Kelly Timberman of Mills, WY – 88.5 points (\$9,500)
- 3) Heath Ford of Greeley, CO – 88.5 points (\$9,500)
- 4) Jess Davis of Payson, UT – 86.5 points (\$5,000)
- 5) Zach Dishman of Beaumont, TX – 85.5 points (\$3,000)
- 6) Will Lowe of Canyon, TX – 85.5 points (\$3,000)

#### **Saddle Bronc Riding**

- 1) Jess Martin of Dillon, MT – 89 points (\$20,500)
- 2) J.J. Elshere of Quinn, SD – 88.5 points (\$12,000)
- 3) Cody Wright of Millford, UT – 86.5 points (\$8,000)
- 4) Rusty Allen of Eagle Mountain, UT – 84.5 points (\$5,500)
- 5) Bradley Harter of Weatherford, TX – 83 points (\$4,000)