

79th Stonyford Rodeo Highlights

by Roy Stewart

The 79th Annual Stonyford Rodeo began with a burst of beauty as Gracelyn Hayes circled the arena wearing a resplendent suit of silver spangles. Gracelyn is a 15 year-old student from Red Bluff who was last year's Queen Runner-Up.

The rodeo opened at 5 p.m. on Friday, April 29, 2022, in Stonyford's Brother Moore Arena. The crowd



[Aubrianna Keeler is crowned 2022 Stonyford Rodeo Queen](#)

was sparse and filled fewer than half of the arena seats, but the pageantry as it unfolded was a delight to behold. The events included last year's queen, Michaela Decker, and this year's queen-contestants, Aubrianna Keeler and Emma Canalia entering the arena, and then the crowning of Aubrianna Keeler as the 2022 Rodeo Queen. The opening events also included a tour around the arena of Jacque Ray in the Horsemen's antique surrey. Jacque and her husband, Phil, who had passed away in July 2021, are this year's rodeo dedicatees.

The rodeo had eight PRCA events with a total of fifty-one competitors, in addition to Ladies Breakaway Roping, with eight contestants and the Mutton Bustin' with its ten children ages four to six years old. The fast paced rodeo events were exciting to watch, but the stars of the evening were Mexican Charro ropers Tomas Garcilazo and his seven-year-old son, Louie. They demonstrated exceptional roping and horseback riding skills that had the rodeo audience cheering.

Our clown and barrelman J.J. Harrison also did two acts. After the first event, he did a dancing act with a rodeo fan from the audience that drew lots of laughs. Then, again, later in the rodeo, he appeared in his fat suit and enticed three ladies from the crowd to join him in the arena. They then had an athletic dance competition in which one of the ladies tripped J.J. to the ground and then jumped on him and punctured his fat suit. J.J. was taken by surprise, and that was funny.

It was a safe rodeo in which the only near accident was when saddle bronc rider Davis Mardesich was thrown against a back wall fence sign. He suffered what looked to be a hard hit, but the two pick-up men kept the horse moving and Davis limped from the arena under his own steam.

The bulls won most of their events. There were only two qualified rides over the two days of rodeo, and both were on Friday night. Colby Demo won the event, with 85.5 points, and Ray Mayo finished second with 80 points. The All-Around Cowboy winner was Chant DeForest. He also competed this day and won for his performances in Team Roping and Tie-Down Roping.

On Saturday the rodeo began at 1 p.m. with an opening ceremony that was similar to one on Friday, except for the crowning of the queen. This rodeo had a total of eleven events: the standard eight PRCA

events, with fifty-five professionals, plus a Novice Bull Riding competition with nine amateurs, Breakaway Racing with eight ladies, and the ever-popular Mutton Bustin' with eleven children.

The first event was the Novice Bull Riding. The cowboys may have been novices, but the bulls weren't. They were very lively and nearly caused injury to three riders: Nathaniel Lentz was nearly gored right out of the chute. Two rides later, Garrett Hunt narrowly escaped serious hurt and the final rider, Wyatt Vineyard, had a very close call. The bullfighters earned their keep in this event.

Steer Wrestling was next. Of the nine competitors, the last to ride, Brushton Minton, took home the bacon when he finished first with a 6.8-second time.

The eleven mutton busters straggled into the arena next. Their first contest was for best dressed; they then they moved to the chutes for their individual mutton rides. It was a fun time for the kids and the fans.

The first of the two women's events, Breakaway Roping, was next. The first rider was the overall winner, Lacy Hook, with a 3.0-second time.

Bareback Riding came next and it had the two best rides of the rodeo: R.C. Landingham, with 82 points, and Clayton Biglow, with 80 points. Both of these cowboys have been winners in past Stonyford rodeos. R.C. Landingham won in 2021 and in 2018. Clayton Biglow won in 2015 and finished second in 2021 and 2016.

Saddle Bronc Riding was next. The first two riders, Reed Neely and Q. McWhorter finished in first and second place, respectively, for the rodeo. The eighth rider, Keldon Goodie, finished fourth. A lot of great action was seen in this event.

J.J. Harrison appeared next with his act, in which he enticed two ladies and a man from the crowd to join him in the arena. They did a funny race that involved quickly donning a tee shirt, eating a cold hotdog, chug-a-lugging a warm beer, and dunking a football in his barrel. He had said that kicking and scratching were permissible. So, one of the ladies and the man engaged in a friendly tussle as they competed at dunking the football. The act drew a lot of laughs and loud applause.

The next event, Team Roping, also produced great action. The team of D.J. Parker and Cody Stewart won second place with their 4.8-second performance.

The Specialty Act came next. As with Friday, Tomas Garcilazo and Louie pleased the crowd with their roping skills. Near the end of their roping, Tomas' wife entered the arena in a colorful Mexican dress and showed off her riding skill.

Tie-Down Roping and Barrel Racing led into the final Bull Riding event. Tie Down had ten competitors and the rodeo winner, Dan Williams. Barrel Racing featured eleven ladies and some good rides; however, the top three winners had rode on Friday.



Louie and his dad, Tomas, twirl together.

Bull Riding had five contestants, none of whom qualified. Even so, the event provided exciting action.

The bull riding finished the professional rodeo events. Sunday was an all-amateur day. We called it our “fun” day because kids, grownups, and dogs all competed in arena events. The standard rodeo events on Sunday consisted of Junior Steer Riding, Team Roping, Barrel Racing, and Open Breakaway Roping in addition to Mutton Bustin’. The two “fun” events were kids and mother’s boot races and dog and owner races.

Team Roping, with its thirty-three contestants and Barrel Racing, with its thirty-four competitors were the main events. The Team Roping was split into two sections, and then the top ten finishers raced to determine the overall winner. The Barrel Racing was divided into age groups: senior and junior. There were twenty-one seniors and thirteen juniors—each had its own winner.



Maci Cohn does a *Cossack Drag*.

At the midpoint of the rodeo, two young ladies from nearby Lassen performed a Specialty Act of trick riding. Their names are Maci Cohn and Camryn Schweningen and they’re eighth graders at Lassen View Elementary school. Each did several turns around the arena showing off different riding “tricks.” They were wonderful.

All in all, the 79th Annual Stonyford Rodeo was great entertainment that provided a mixture of good rodeo action and top flight specialty acts.

We’ll be back next year; plan to attend.