

Texas roper rallies in clutch situation to earn trip to NFR

During the waning moments of a pro rodeo regular season, compelling come-from-behind stories gallop onto the scene.

This year, Texas tie-down roper Tyson Durfey had a remarkable story of rallying in a clutch situation. When Durfey began competing at the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association's Pro Tour Finale in Rapid City, South Dakota, the veteran pro competitor knew he had to lasso the bigger paychecks to earn a trip to the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo.

Durfey, the 2016 PRCA tie-down roping world champion from Brock, entered the rodeo ranked No. 20 in the PRCA's tie-down roping world standings. To gain a berth in the Dec. 3-12 National Finals at Globe Life Field, in Arlington, a competitor had to finish in the top 15 in the standings in an event when the regular season concluded on Sept. 30.

The Sept. 22-26 Pro Tour Finale was the last sizable rodeo of the 2020 regular season. Durfey entered the Rapid City rodeo on the bubble watch to qualify for the NFR, 6,692 points behind No. 15-ranked Caddo Lewallen.

But Durfey went on an aggressive rally by finishing in the money in all four rounds in Rapid City. With the title at stake in the final round on Sept. 26, he clinched it with a time of 8.0 seconds.

According to prorodeo.com, Durfey earned 8,740 points in Rapid City and finished the regular season ranked 12th in tie-down roping with 47,292 points.

"It's fun to be put in a room with a back against the wall and it's either all or nothing," Durfey said. "I'm thankful for the situation that I was in and I'm thankful for the Lord giving me strength to get through it."

Durfey was in the same type of situation in 2016, the same year that he earned the tie-down roping gold buckle. At that time, he finished in the money at season-closer rodeos in Stephenville, Pasadena (Texas) and Mona, Utah.

"I think I was \$6,000 or \$7,000 [points] out the last week of the season and I think I won close to \$8,000 and got in there," Durfey said. "Luckily, we were able to do it again. But I don't want to make a habit of it, that's for sure."

Durfey has earned his 13th trip to the National Finals. He also qualified for the championships in 2007-11 and in 2013-19. In those years, the NFR was in Las Vegas.

"I'm super grateful, but the feeling now is we have to

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Brett Hoffman

get to work again," he said. "The [NFR] qualification has happened, but the hard work is yet to come. I really want to perform well at the National Finals and leave my mark on Texas as best as possible because it may be the only chance I ever get to do it."

The NFR is scheduled to return to Las Vegas next year after relocating to Arlington in 2020 because of coronavirus restrictions.

"I'm very thankful that we're even having a National Finals and I'm even more thankful that it's so close to home in Texas," Durfey said.

PRCA CONVENTION SCHEDULED

The PRCA's annual convention is scheduled for Nov. 30-December 3 at the Omni Fort Worth Hotel and the Fort Worth Convention Center, according to prorodeo.com.

Convention leaders will heavily focus on the theme, Challenge of Change," on the uncertainty pro rodeo has addressed with throughout the 2020 season and the changes facing professional sports in the future. The convention will feature an annual address from PRCA chief executive officer George Taylor. The event also will include the PRCA Member Tradeshow as well as several topical breakout sessions.

A PRCA welcome reception is scheduled for December 1. The PRCA Annual Awards Banquet is December 2. The convention will close on December 3 with rodeo committee meetings and the contract personnel council meetings. Attendees may register by visiting www.prcaconvention.com.

COLLEGE RODEO UPDATE

On the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association Southwest Region circuit, Tarleton State is ranked No. 1 in the Southwest Region 2020-2021 men's team title race with 960 points going into this weekend's Clarendon College Rodeo. Western Texas College is ranked second with 780 after the first three rodeos of the 2020-2021 regular season.

Clarendon College is ranked No. 3 with 725 points after finishing second at the Oct. 1-3 Vernon College Rodeo in Vernon.

The Vernon College Rodeo was the second of 10 Southwest Region shows scheduled for the 2020-2021 regular season.

In the regional women's team standings, Weatherford College is ranked No. 1 with 400. South Plains College is ranked No. 2 with 365.

The Clarendon College Rodeo is scheduled for Thurs-

day through Saturday, Oct. 15-17, in Clarendon. The Texas Tech Rodeo, the regular season's fourth South-west Region show, is Oct. 29-31 in Lubbock.

PBR UPDATE

On the Professional Bull Riders' circuit, three-time PBR world champion Silvano Alves, a Brazilian who lives in Decatur, clinched the title at the Oct. 10-11 Unleash The Beast tour stop in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and earned \$30,500. He was the only rider who made a qualified ride on all three bulls throughout the two-day show.

According to pbr.com, Alves moved up 14 places in the world standings. He's currently ranked No. 25.

Jose Vitor Leme, a Brazilian who lives in Decatur, is ranked No. 1 with 1,336 points. Joao Ricardo Vieira, another Brazilian who is from Decatur, is ranked No. 2 with 772.91.

The 2020 World Finals is scheduled for Nov. 12-15 at AT&T Stadium in Arlington.

Brett Hoffman, a Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame member, has covered rodeos and horse show events for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram for more than 35 years. Email him at bhoffman777@earthlink.net.

Injuries pile up for Cowboys, but playoffs still possible

Dak Prescott joined both his tackles and his tight end on the list of season-ending injuries for the Dallas offense when the star quarterback fractured his ankle in a gruesome scene against the New York Giants.

The emotional setback added to the challenge of

trying to make the play-

offs in coach Mike McCarthy's first season, although the rally for a 37-34 victory behind backup

Andy Dalton vaulted the Cowboys (2-3) to first place in the struggling NFC East.

"I know how much this means to him and how much being out there for this team means for him," running back Ezekiel Elliott said of Prescott. "So, it's hard. But all we can do right now is support him. We just gotta support '4' and make sure he is good, and go out there and win ballgames for him."

Prescott had surgery for a compound fracture and dislocation of his right ankle and the team said he was expected to be released from a hospital Monday. The two-time Pro Bowler's lower leg got caught under New York defensive back Logan Ryan on a tackle at the end of a 9-yard run.

Left tackle Tyron Smith is out for the year with a neck issue after playing just two games, and right tackle La'el Collins never saw the field before needing season-ending hip surgery. Tight end Blake Jarwin tore a knee ligament in the opener.

The Dallas defense has been plagued by injuries as well, the latest being defensive tackle Trysten Hill's season-ending knee injury against the Giants.

The Cowboys, who play Arizona at home next Monday night, have been without Leighton Vander Esch for a month after the middle line-backer broke a collarbone in the opener. Defensive tackle Gerald McCoy sustained a season-ending leg injury in training camp.

Cornerback Anthony Brown returned after missing the minimum three games on injured reserve with a rib issue and returned a fumble for a touchdown. Another starting cornerback, Chidobe Awuzie, is out with a groin injury.

The decision to go with a proven veteran as a backup to Prescott could prove huge. Dalton led Cincinnati to the playoffs five straight seasons during nine years as the starter.

The Cowboys won't have to wait long for a chance to take control of a weak division. After the Cardinals visit, consecutive NFC East road games in Washington and Philadelphia follow. Those teams have just one win apiece.



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