



## UT Martin’s 55th Annual Spring College Rodeo scheduled for this Thursday through Saturday

MARTIN, Tenn. – The 55th edition of the University of Tennessee at Martin Spring College Rodeo is set for this week as action will take place on Thursday, April 13 through Saturday, April 15 at 7:30 p.m. each night from the Ned McWherter Agricultural Pavilion.

Annually considered one of the biggest events held on campus, the UT Martin Spring College Rodeo will include timed events and rough stock events (including bull riding) each night. The Skyhawks will compete against fellow Ozark Region members Arkansas-Monticello, East Mississippi Community College, Missouri Valley College, Murray State, Northwest Mississippi Community College, Pearl River Community College, Southern Arkansas, Three Rivers College and West Alabama in addition to other colleges and universities.

On Wednesday, April

12, the Wendell Alexander Realty and Tennessee Department of Agriculture crawfish supper will take place at 5:30 p.m. inside the American Legion building in Martin. Corn on the cob and new potatoes will be served while hamburgers and hot dogs will also be available for the price of \$25 per plate. The event is hosted by the UT Martin Rodeo Booster Club while all proceeds will go towards the UT Martin Rodeo Scholarship Fund.

Thursday is Tyson, Obion County Complex Performance night as fans can enter a drawing for the chance to win a riding lawnmower.

Friday’s action is labeled Tennessee Tractor, LLC Performance night. The Weakley County 4-H Mounted Drill team will perform at both 7:10 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Saturday will start with the Edward Jones Investments free barbecue

lunch, located at the Ned McWherter Agricultural Pavilion at 11:30 a.m. Included in that event is the meet-and-greet with rodeo team members, an autograph session and family activities. The Martin Paving Company Championship Finals follows that evening as the top-10 Ozark Region contestants from the previous rounds will compete in each event.

Garrett Yerigan will once again serve as the public address announcer while Brinson James will fill the role of rodeo clown and funny man. Top bucking bulls and horses will be provided by Mark Johnson of Universal Rodeos, which is located in Crenshaw, Miss.

The annual UT Martin silent auction features different items each night as bidding will be live at the rodeo and close after the team roping event. Proceeds go directly to the Skyhawk rodeo program

for scholarships and facility upkeep.

Tickets are \$12 on Thursday and \$15 for both Friday and Saturday sessions. Ages five and under receive free admission but must sit in an adult’s lap. A very limited number of tickets remain for Saturday while tickets are still available for Thursday and Friday sessions. All seats are reserved and can be purchased at the link above.

Doors will open at 6 p.m. each evening while there will be a \$5 charge per vehicle for event parking.

For those who cannot attend but would still like to keep up with all of the action, a live stream of each night’s performance round will be provided online for \$10 per session. The live video stream can be purchased at the link located at the top of the webpage. Star 95.1 FM will also broadcast the radio call live on all three nights at the link above.

## UTM Rodeo standout Thrasher is head coach

Chase Thrasher, who produced a remarkable career as a University of Tennessee at Martin rodeo student-athlete, is in his first season as the Skyhawk head coach in 2022-23. The fifth head coach in program history, Thrasher was named head-coach-in-waiting on April 26, 2022 before officially taking over on July 1 following the retirement of longtime head coach John Luthi.



Chase Thrasher

Thrasher spent the 2021-22 season as a UT Martin assistant coach, helping the Skyhawk men’s and women’s teams combine for one victory and six runner-up finishes in 10 Ozark Region rodeos. The men’s team qualified for their 47th appearance at the College National Finals Rodeo in the last 48 years before placing 10th in the national standings - the ninth top-10 finish for the men’s team since 2005.

History was also made at the 2022 CNFR as Cole Walker outlasted the field to bring home men’s all-around national championship honors. The Sparta, Tenn. native - who competed alongside Thrasher in team roping at the 2021 CNFR - became UT Martin’s first national champion since 2010 and the ninth overall cowboy to win individual national champion accolades.

As a student-athlete from 2017-21, Thrasher was a four-time CNFR qualifier. He represented the Skyhawks at the annual event in Casper, Wyo. on three different occasions, concluding his freshman season ranked fourth nationally in tie down roping after winning the

short round finals.

Thrasher also advanced to the finals in tie down roping in 2019, placing 11th in the event. He ranked second in the Ozark Region (seventh nationally) in tie down roping in 2020, punching his ticket to the national championship event before it was cancelled. He completed his collegiate career at the 73rd annual CNFR this past June, competing in both tie down roping and team roping events.

In addition to his National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association success, Thrasher is a four-time International Professional Rodeo Association Finals qualifier and a four-time Lonestar Rodeo Association qualifier – winning the year-end calf roping championship three times on that circuit.

A Columbia, Tenn. native, Thrasher graduated from UT Martin with a degree in farm and ranch management in 2021. He is married to the former Mollie Stroup of Cape Girardeau, Mo., who is also a UT Martin rodeo alum and currently serves as the program’s administrative assistant.

## Waltz returns to UTM as Assistant Coach

Tyler Waltz, who enjoyed a remarkable career as a University of Tennessee at Martin rodeo student-athlete from 2010-14, has rejoined the Skyhawk program as an assistant rough-stock coach under John Luthi.



Tyler Waltz

A member of UT Martin’s 2013-14 national men’s rodeo championship squad and world champion bareback rider, Waltz brings a wealth of experience in the collegiate and professional arenas to the Skyhawk program.

As a student-athlete, Waltz was a three-time College National Finals Rodeo participant while helping guide UT Martin to Ozark Region men’s team championships during his junior and senior campaigns. He was one of six Skyhawk cowboys who traveled to Casper, Wyo. for the 2014 CNFR as UT Martin became the first team located east of the Mississippi River to claim a national rodeo championship.

During his senior season, Waltz finished second in the Ozark Region in bareback riding and placed third nationally in the CNFR bareback riding finals. That followed a junior campaign where he was crowned the Ozark Region champion in bareback riding, once again advancing to the CNFR finals in that event before

placing sixth in the nation. As a freshman, he finished second in the Ozark Region in all-around and third in bareback riding, qualifying for the CNFR in both bareback riding and steer wrestling events.

On the professional circuit, Waltz was a two-time International Professional Rodeo Association bareback riding champion (2018-19) and also was the recipient of the IPRA Jack Wiseman Award in 2018. He took part in 362 attempted rides on the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) tour from 2012-20, ending the 2017 and 2020 calendar years ranked in the top-45 of the world rankings.

A Jersey Shore, Pa. native, Waltz earned his degree in agricultural business from UT Martin in 2014.

## UT Martin Men’s Rodeo records highest scoring tally since 2019 while Women’s Squad places third at Arkansas-Monticello

MONTICELLO, Ark. – The University of Tennessee at Martin men’s rodeo squad generated its most points in three-plus years while the women’s team claimed a third-place finish in muddy conditions this weekend at Arkansas-Monticello.

The Skyhawk cowboys compiled 770 points over the course of the three-day rodeo, 75 points higher than their previous season-high tally and the most for the program since scoring 975 points at Murray State on Nov. 21-23, 2019. As a direct result, the UT Martin men came away with its third runner-up finish of the 2022-23 campaign, trailing only Missouri Valley College (795 points) in the standings.

On the women’s side, the Skyhawks earned 222 points for their third-best scoring total of the 2022-23 season. UT Martin’s weekend performance ranked just behind West Alabama (405 points) and Missouri Valley College (272) in the



team standings.

Cole Walker dominated in calf roping, winning the event with an 18.8 average. That came after the senior from Sparta, Tenn. ranked second in the field in the opening round (10.0) and in the short go (8.8).

In saddle bronc riding, Jack Smithson performed extremely well with top-tier performances in all three phases. He placed second in average (134), second in the short round (72) and third in the opening go (62).

Three Skyhawk cowboys accrued points in steer wrestling, headed by Jesse

Keysaer (third with an 18.7 average, fourth with a 6.2 in the opening round, fifth with a 12.5 in the short go). Logan Neal’s third-place time of 5.8 seconds in the first round and Cannon Smith’s 7.1-second effort in the opening go (fifth-best time in the field) were also good enough to secure team points.

Grace Bryant accounted for a large chunk of points in goat tying as the junior out of Pendleton, SC finished second in the first round (7.0 flat) and third in both average (14.3) and in the short go (7.3). Emma Kate Wilder additionally

provided points after her 7.3 time in the first round was part of a five-way split of fourth place.

UT Martin’s Walker and Will McCraw put together a commanding performance in team roping, nearly sweeping all three phases of the event. Their 11.4 average and 4.9 in the short go were both the best marks in the field while their 6.5 in the opening round ranked second.

The women’s score received a boost from Savannah Moran’s solid point totals in barrel racing. She placed fourth in average (28.91), fourth in the opening round (14.56) and fifth in the short go (14.35).

Both Skyhawk teams will proudly host the 55th Annual UT Martin Spring College Rodeo on campus this week. Action will take place on Thursday, April 13 through Saturday, April 15 at 7:30 p.m. each night at the Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex.

[utmsports.com](https://utmsports.com)

Good Luck

SKYHAWK RODEO TEAM

On the Road to the CNFR!

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