

Stampede stocked with quality stock

courtesy of www.prorodeoonline.net

About 90 percent of the cowboys who have tried to ride the high-bucking, quick-turning saddle bronc mare named Brown Bomber have failed.

Yet when Jeff Willert randomly drew Brown Bomber for Thursday night's go-round of the Snake River Stampede, the Belvidere, S.D., cowboy had to be happy.

Quality horses and bulls give cowboys greater opportunities for greater scores and, ultimately, better paychecks.

Larry Davis of Adrian, Ore., has been a rodeo judge for 24 years. He said the scores of saddle bronc, bareback and bull rides are based 50 percent on the cowboy's performance and 50 percent on the performance of the stock.

"We have so many points for the ride and so many points for the animal. So if you don't have a good animal you can't score very high," Davis said.

That's where Binion Cervi comes in.

Cervi and his family's company, Cervi Championship Rodeo, supplied a majority of the rough stock for the Snake River Stampede. Bud Kirby's Bar T Rodeo stock contracting company out of Utah also supplied rough stock to the rodeo.

Cervi, from Sterling, Colo., and 14 employees trailered 25 mares with their colts, 60 bucking horses (there are 80 to 90 total), 60 head of bulls, over 150 steers and around 20 calves in seven semi trucks and two goose-neck trailers.

"This is our biggest rodeo of the summer," said Cervi, who will cater to 19 other rodeos this year, including the National Finals. "This rodeo gets better and better every year."

The Snake River Stampede is one of the top-10 paying rodeos around. This year's total prize money is \$392,450.

Cowboys are drawn to the Nampa-based rodeo because of the large purse and quality of competition.

"It's a real high paying rodeo, it's one of the better ones this time of the year," said reigning world champion saddle bronc rider Chad Ferley. "Everybody wants to come here and get a piece of it."

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The percentages played in Brown Bomber's favor as he sprinted out of the chute, took four strides and then dumped Willert, the 2005 National Finals Rodeo World Champion saddle bronc rider, on the second buck for no score.

Ferley of Oelrichs, S.D., rode Millers Wheel for a score of 86, to tie Anthony Bello for the first go-round lead.

"That's a real tough horse," said Ferley, the reigning world champion. "I had that horse at the N.F.R. last year and won it a round on it, so I was just happy to have it here."

But Ferley said drawing a good horse isn't everything.

"If you get a good draw that's only 50 percent of it," Farley said. "It's real important that I do my end of it."

Through three go-rounds there have been some high scores.

Bobby Mote, the top-earning bareback rider on the circuit, had a high-scoring ride of 87 on perennial National Finals Rodeo horse Goldielocks.

"Goldielocks has been one of the top-paying horses at the National Finals Rodeo for the last four or five years, so it's a big advantage for me to show up and have that horse here," he said of the same horse he won in Houston with earlier this summer. "I can't do my stuff on a horse that's subpar. There were great horses out tonight. Our odds of having a good horse tonight were pretty high, I thought."

Also in bareback riding, Ryan Gray scored an 80 and Noah Bayes and Josh Cole scored 79 and 78, respectively.

On Wednesday night, reigning world champion B.J. Schumacher took the lead in bull riding with an 87-point ride on Mr. Bo Jangles. Cody Hancock and Lucas Dick each had 86-point rides Tuesday night on Dirty Blanket and Stitch, respectively.

On Tuesday, Shannon Miller had the lead after two go-rounds in bareback riding with a score of 83 on Oakley Robin, and Anthony Bello led after three go-rounds with his Tuesday night ride on Painted Warrior.

Just one bull rider — Ted Bert, who scored an 84 on Cocktail — was able to stay on for a qualifying eight-second ride.

"They each bring their best animals," Davis said of the stock contractors.