

Top Clowns Come Forefront As Spectators Look To Upcoming Eastern Kansas Pro Rodeo Series

Rodeo typically means outstanding cowboys and cowgirls competing with and against superior rodeo livestock.

Yet, others, perhaps the younger set, yet more mature as well, think first and foremost of the "clowns at the rodeo."

As often as not, those reflecting "how the rodeo was" will exclaim about the clowns before the contestants, the horses and the cattle.

So, when committeemen were coordinating contracts for rodeos in the Eastern Kansas Pro Rodeos Series, clowns ranked high on agenda.

That's according to John Teagarden, LaCygne, who developed the rodeo series to encourage contestant participation and spectator attendance.

Three leading professional rodeo clowns will converge on the Eastern Kansas Pro Rodeo Series nine-days August 11-19, Teagarden said.



Matt Tarr

Stops include the Linn County Fair Rodeo, Mound City, August 11-12; Inter-State Fair & Rodeo, Coffeyville, August 16-19; and Eureka Pro Rodeo, Eureka, August 18-19.

The pro rodeo series has been advertised and promoted extensively on WIBW, Country Legends 106.9, the BIG 94.5 Country, WibwNewsNow, and the Kansas Agriculture Network.

"Clown lineup for this unique series features a highly decorated arena funnyman, a Marine Corps veteran, and an 'up and comer' impressing rodeo insiders,"

Teagarden said.

Linn County Fair Rodeo spectators will meet the "rookie" of the bunch, Matt Tarr, 33, Cody, Wyoming. The four-year Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) member brings a lot of "rodeo savvy" to the arena.

"I started working at the Cody Night Rodeo as a teenager feeding livestock, preparing the arena, cleaning the stands, and selling tickets downtown during the day," Tarr said.

Cody, Wyoming, near the east gate to Yellowstone National Park, is a historic Western town hosting 90 rodeo performances during the summer.

"After a few years, I was promoted to bullfighter," Tarr reflected. "One night the rodeo producer handed me the portable microphone and said 'you are the funnyman.' I found my calling."

Teagarden admitted, "Matt Tarr's rodeo credits are still slim, but we have been hearing his name from announcers and other rodeo affiliates, 'people who are in the know,' for a couple of years.

"We are excited to introduce Matt Tarr to our Mound City spectators," Teagarden said.

Inter-State Fair & Rodeo at Coffeyville rodeo will welcome Johnny "Backflip" Dudley, 39, Aubrey, Texas, to the arena August 16-19.

Previously serving eight years in the Marine Corps, the now 13-year PRCA member has a business degree from the University of Houston "in case I have to get a real job," Dudley claimed.

Dudley's rodeo credits include entertaining four times at the Turquoise Rodeo Circuit Finals and four times at the All-American Rodeo Finals.

"Backflip's acts include Cow Patty, Exploding Limousine and Mailman Skunk," Teagarden related.

Eureka Pro Rodeo, August 18-19, will highlight the "dean of the clowns," known simply as "Gizmo" by thousands of rodeo fans, Dale McCracken, 56, of Fairview, Missouri.

With 25 years of arena experience behind his grease paint, Gizmo has an extensive "clown" resume.

Highlights include specialty act at the 2005 National Finals Rodeo, nominated five times for the PRCA Comedy Act of the Year and featured act 19-times at various Pro Rodeo Circuit Finals.

"An accomplished singer, Gizmo may break out an appropriate chorus at any point during a performance,"

Teagarden said.

Acts which McCracken will present at Eureka include Dr. Giz Ambulance, Gizmo's Shrinking Machine and the Chicken Rocket.

"Rodeo fans that attend at least one performance of each of the three rodeos in the Eastern Kansas series will be eligible for a drawing to receive an engraved Moore Maker trophy knife after the Eureka rodeo, Saturday, Aug. 19," Teagarden said.

"A canceled ticket or a rodeo program will suffice as attendance proof at each rodeo and must be presented to rodeo committee officials at Eureka or Coffeyville August 19," he explained.

The Linn County Fair is in full swing this week as 400-plus head of 4-H and FFA members' livestock arrive have arrived at the Mound City fairgrounds, according to John Teagarden, longtime fair board member.

Grandstand activities for the 147-year-old county fair, one of the five largest in Kansas, began last Friday, and conclude with the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) rodeo Friday and Saturday evenings, Aug. 11-12.

With the full slate of features, the fair has been advertised and promoted extensively on WIBW, Country Legends 106.9, the BIG 94.5 Country, WibwNewsNow, and the Kansas Agriculture Network.

"Figures for attendance and entries this past weekend, dubbed the 'Three Day Motorsports Weekend' will probably be a record," Teagarden estimated.

"Attendance at the Friday evening Two-Car Team Demolition Derby was 3-percent last year," he said.

"Grandstands were near capacity for the Demolition Derby on Saturday, and the Outlaw Truck and Tractor Pull, Sunday.

"Seventy-two demolition cars competed in the two nights of 'demo derby' action," Teagarden continued. "Purse money totaled \$6,000 for the team car competition and \$7,400 for the Saturday traditional derby."

Outlaw Truck and Tractor competition saw 50 machines from five states, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa and Texas.

"The two-performance PRCA Rodeo, August 11-12, will be the first leg of the Eastern Kansas Pro Rodeo Series," Teagarden pointed out.

The series is a joint venture of the Linn County Fair, Mound City; Inter-State Fair & Rodeo, Coffeyville, August 16-19; and the Eureka Pro Rodeo, Eureka, August 18-19.

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The Mound City rodeo will feature livestock of New Frontier Rodeo, Gypsum, while rodeo clown Matt Tarr, Cody, Wyoming, will entertain the crowd. Rodeo announcer Troy Goodridge, Ft Scott, returns for the seventh year to keep fans informed of the arena action.

Judging of Linn County Fair exhibits continues throughout the week, concluding with the livestock premium sale Saturday morning, Aug. 12, at 10 o'clock.

Updates can be found at Linn County Fair & Rodeo on Facebook.

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"Your mind is a powerful tool, so fill it with positive thoughts, and your life will flourish."

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