

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo

<http://www.guymonrodeo.com>

For information
Contact Ted Harbin

(660) 254-1900
imteditor@gmail.com

Patterson plans to carry gold buckle back to Texas County

GUYMON, Okla. – When Rocky Patterson won the final round at the Clem McSpadden National Finals Steer Roping last November, he got a lot more than the \$6,000 go-round check.

He walked away from the Lazy E Arena northeast of Oklahoma City with the gold buckle that comes with winning the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association world championship. It took the Pratt, Kan., cowboy 18 years on the ProRodeo trail and 15 qualifications to the steer roping finale to do it.

“It’s definitely a relief,” said Patterson, 44, an Oklahoma Panhandle State University graduate. “After you do something for 20 years and you’ve had a goal for 20 years, it’s like taking a weight off your shoulders.”

Over the course of his career, Patterson finished ever so close to the world title while watching “The Legend” Guy Allen win steer roping gold buckles year after year. Then he saw younger ropers like Trevor Brazile and Scott Snedecor claw their way to a pair of championships each. Over the years, Patterson just plugged away like the Energizer bunny, lassoing event titles, go-round checks and the average title at the steer roping finals twice.

“I’d like to think it’s something I can do again, something I can do this year,” said Patterson, who will return to his old stomping grounds in Texas County, Okla., for the 2010 Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo from April 26-May 2 at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena – performances will be 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 30; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 1; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 2. “My short-term goal is to get rid of some of this snow and getting to where I can practice.”

While the veteran might have an upper hand on some of the tricks of the trade, skipping out on rehearsals is no way to defend world titles. Indoor arenas aren’t the norm, especially in south-central Kansas, and covered pens big enough to work out the intricate details of steer roping are even rarer.

“We’ve had a lot of snow,” he said. “Before I went to Odessa the first of the year, I didn’t get to practice hardly any, and it showed.”

While most athletes say winning the first championship is difficult, most would agree that defending titles is harder. In Patterson’s case, there was a lot of stress before the final numbers revealed that he had won the gold buckle by \$1,432 over Snedecor, the 2008 champ.

And now he’ll have the opportunity to see just how tough it is to win a second straight, all the while carrying the moniker of being a non-saddle bronc rider from Panhandle State to have won a PRCA crown.

Over the course of recent history, Texas County has been dubbed the Saddle Bronc Riding Capital of the World, with ties to champs like Billy Etbauer (five), Robert Etbauer (two), Tom Reeves, Jeffrey Willert and Taos Muncy.

In fact, Patterson’s ties to No Man’s Land almost weren’t.

“I signed a scholarship at Panhandle, then over the summer, I got talked into going to McNeese State,” he said. “I spent about three weeks down there.”

When he arrived in Lake Charles, La., the setting wasn’t as he had envisioned, and the promises made during his recruiting weren’t to be.

“I called Doc Gardner one afternoon the first of September,” Patterson said of Dr. R. Lynn Gardner, the longtime rodeo coach at Panhandle State who died in the mid-1990s. “I told him I’d made a bad mistake and that I wanted to come to Goodwell. He said, ‘Tomorrow is the last day of registration and if you get here, I’ll get you registered but I already gave your scholarship away. But if you get here in time, I’ll get one for you.’”

“That was back before cell phones, so I was at a payphone. I drove straight home, packed and left and drove straight there. I was never so glad to see the Panhandle of Oklahoma in all my life.”

While in school, Patterson competed in steer wrestling, tie-down roping and team roping. All-around hands are important to schools in the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association, because they can earn more team points. During his tenure, Patterson was just one cog in a pretty triumphant Panhandle State machine, which included Daryl Radacy, Robert Etbauer, Dan Etbauer and Paul Peterson, just to name a few.

“There were a lot of cowboys there, and when you go there and see those kind of guys, you know you’ve got a pretty good rodeo team,” Patterson said. “Doc Gardner was just a super good guy. He didn’t fit into the rodeo scene, but he was smart enough to learn how to recruit and make a good team.”

So when he returns to the Panhandle, there will be some glad-tidings and some gatherings with old friends. But there’s also business to tend to, like winning the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo.

“I haven’t done a lot of good there over the years,” he said. “I’ve placed in the rounds, and I’ve placed in the average, but I’ve never won it or done real good there.

“It’s a really good roping, and it gets lots of entries. It’s also one of the first real good ones in the spring for the steer ropers.”

World champions have won the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo, and there’s no reason they can’t again. Patterson is counting on that.