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Dirty Jacket is another superstar in Carr's bareback herd

GUYMON, Okla. – A lot of great horses have been showcased annually the first weekend in May at the Guymon Pioneer Days Rodeo.

Dirty Jacket is just one of the most recent, and he's proving to be a powerful piece of the Carr Pro Rodeo herd. The 6-year-old gelding by Night Jacket and out of Dirty has carried bareback riders to the winner's circle in Guymon each of the last two years, and that's just one of the reasons he may do so again at this year's event, set for 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 30; 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, May 1; and 2 p.m. Sunday, May 2.

"That horse just bucks," said D.V. Fennell of Neosho, Mo., who finished the 2009 season ninth in the world standings. "He leaps in the air and shows off. He's not just a dead easy hopper, but he's a mix between a hopper and a buckler. He's the one that you want.

In cowboy terms, a hopper is a horse that just jumps and kicks, allowing the riders to show off their spurring strokes. A buckler will show a little more power and a few moves that provide greater potential for buck offs before the eight-second qualifying ride is complete.

"Those horses like that grow up, though," Fennell said. "Usually by that time, they turn into buckers, and they're rank."

Jerad Schlegel of Glenwood, Colo., rode Dirty Jacket for 87 points to win Guymon in 2008, then Jared Smith of Williston, Fla., rode the gelding for 87 a season ago to split the victory.

"When I took him to Guymon in '08 and Jerad had him, that was the first rodeo I took him to," said Pete Carr, owner of Carr Pro Rodeo. "I ease him around that year and let him grow up some. In 2009, he went to enough rodeos to qualify for the Wrangler National Finals rodeo."

Carr knows what he's doing. He rode bareback horses for years before founding the livestock company just five years ago. Since then, he's seen Real Deal named the Bareback Horse of the Year and River Boat Annie earn the runner-up award.

"I bought Dirty Jacket at Jim Zinser's house as a 3-year-old, and I watched them buck him with a dummy on him," Carr said. "He'd never had a rider – only two trips with a dummy."

But Carr saw something special in the bucking machine. This past March, world champion Bobby Mote won a go-round while riding Dirty Jacket at RodeoHouston, one of the largest regular-season events in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.

"He looks really good to ride," said Paul Peterson, one of the pickup men in Guymon who has worked every event Carr Pro Rodeo has put on as the primary stock contractor. "He's kind of wild. Of course, he's usually always the same. Usually blows in the air right out of the chute and will usually angle off to the right a little bit. He's always good."

That's what the cowboys count on when they learn the blind draw has matched them with the horse.

"He is really electric when he leaves the chute," Carr said. "He jumps up in the air and extends everything he can. He kicks and just hangs there and stalls out for three or for jumps, then moves on out. He is young, but so far, he has proven he can take it and so far looks like a 10th-round bareback horse."

That's the round that showcases the exceptional animal athletes at the Wrangler NFR, and it dates back to the days when only the final round of the 10-day event was televised. The producers

wanted to showcase the best of the best in that go-round, and it's still a valuable piece of the puzzle in the race to the world championship.

"I had Dirty Jacket in the 10th round at this last year's NFR," Fennell said. "I placed on him there, and that, along with moving up in the average, made for a nice paycheck."

At the NFR, go-round winners earned more than \$17,000, and subsequent payouts were determined by how well cowboys finished. But the average was based on the 10-round cumulative score, and Fennell finished fourth. All told, he earned about \$61,000 in Las Vegas last December, and he knows where his bread is buttered.

"Pete's got a great set of horses," Fennell said. "You can go through that list, and you can pick seven or eight horses that will be among the elite every time.

"I probably had Dirty Jacket three or four times last year, and I did well on him every time. That one's definitely a standout. If you look at the NFR stock roster, you can see Pete Carr's loaded. That's not just me saying that. That's 16 of the top bareback riders in the world. He's got superstars."



The Carr Pro Rodeo horse Dirty Jacket during the 2009 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. The rider is D.V. Fennell of Neosho, Mo., who placed in the 10th go-round with his ride on the horse.

Photographer, PRCA Photo by Dan Hubbell.