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Ginger Snap a preferred choice among elite bronc riders

GUYMON, Okla. – As he stood anxiously behind the chutes at Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena last May, J.J. Elshere had an idea of what to expect from his dance partner.

The random draw had matched the three-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo saddle bronc rider with Ginger Snap, a Carr Pro Rodeo bucking machine that has helped cowboys reach the pay window quite a bit in her lifetime.

“That’s the first and only time I’ve been on that horse,” said Elshere, 30, of Quinn, S.D. “I’ve seen her quite a bit, and she always looks good. I had a lot of fun on her.”

That’s the sentiment of a lot of cowboys who have seen the 16-year-old bay mare in action, including those who have watched her perform a few times over recent years at the Wrangler NFR, the year-end championship in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association.

“She is a veteran and a very cowboy-friendly horse that they all love to draw,” said Pete Carr, who runs the stock-contracting firm based in Dallas. “She circles around to the left every time the gate opens.”

It’s that kind of move that gives riders the best opportunity to show off their spurring styles and posting big scores. In rough-stock events, scores are tabulated on a 100-point scale, with half the score coming from the animal and half from the cowboy. On the final day of last year’s Guymon rodeo, Elshere and Ginger Snap combined for 88 points to share the rodeo victory with Louisiana cowboy Cody DeMoss.

“She really bucks out of there and feels really good,” Elshere said. “She’s one a guy can just sit down and spur.”

“I hadn’t been to Guymon very many times, but it’s a pretty good one to win.”

Elshere plans to return to this year’s festivities, 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. He’ll be joined by some of the best in the business, many that hunger to ride one of the elite bucking horses provided by Carr Pro Rodeo.

“You can go down the list of any horse Pete has, and you’re going to look at the kinds of horses you want to get on every time,” said Taos Muncy, the 2007 world champion saddle bronc rider from Corona, N.M., who attended Oklahoma Panhandle State University at nearby Goodwell. “Pete works really hard at it. You look forward to going to his rodeos, because he will have NFR horses in every performance.”

And Ginger Snap is one of the horses the cowboys crave most.

“She’s around in front of the chute and looks really good to ride,” said Paul Peterson, a former bronc rider who works as a pickup man – and who has worked that post at the Wrangler NFR three times. “She’s really the one that guys want to get on, and she gives a guy a chance to win on her every time.”

Said Muncy, “I’ve seen that horse a bunch, and every time she looks great. That’d be the perfect horse to draw in Guymon.”

Muncy knows a lot about Carr Pro Rodeo. Not only does he like to compete on Carr livestock, he’s also worked out a sponsorship with the organization.

“Any time you can get a sponsorship at any level when you rodeo, it’s great,” said Muncy, who also won the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association title in 2007, becoming just the third cowboy in

the history of the sport to have won a college title and a ProRodeo title in the same season. “It helps put diesel in the tank and pay entry fees. But I’m pretty lucky to have Pete.”

But so are many other cowboys who make their living on the rodeo trail. In a sport where nothing is guaranteed, the athletes must first pay a fee in order to compete. Then they must do well enough to place in the money. That’s how they pay their bills and also battle for that elusive world championship – the contestants with the most money earned through the rodeo season earns the coveted gold buckle.

“Pete’s got a lot of great horses,” said Elshere, who also earned a share of the victory in Lovington, N.M., atop Carr’s bronc Showgirl. “On that one, she was hard to ride, but I managed to stay in the saddle for long enough.

“Pete’s always coming up with something new that a guy sure does want to get on. But if I had to pick one right now, I’d have to say I’d prefer Ginger Snap.”

So do a lot of other cowboys.



Heith DeMoss of Heflin, La., rides the Carr Pro Rodeo bronc Ginger Snap during the seventh go-round of the 2009 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas. Ginger Snap carried another NFR qualifier, J.J. Elshere, to a share of the Guymon (Okla.) Pioneer Days Rodeo title last year and is one of the many championship-caliber horses that should be part of the action at Oklahoma’s Richest Rodeo when it takes place April 30-May 2, 2010, at the Henry C. Hitch Pioneer Arena. PRCA ProRodeo photo by Mike Copeman.