

Charlotte Sun Herald 04/21/08



By CAROL SAKOWITZ

Teamwork's what counts

Two nights of rodeoing benefits county group, new circuit

ARCADIA --Teamwork both in and around the Arcadia rodeo arena last weekend produced two winners in the first DeSoto County Cattlemen's Ranch Rodeo. The A-L Cattle Co. (A Bar L) of DeSoto won four of eight events to take the all-around Ranch Rodeo team title. The DeSoto County 4-H program, headed by rodeo organizer Christi Pryor, also could be considered a winner as it received a portion of the proceeds of this inaugural event.

The A Bar L team set the standard for its 12 opponents on Friday night, when it won four of the eight events: steer tying, wild cow milking, steer roping and the wild horse race. No other team won more than one event over the two-day competition. A Bar L finished with 81, with Superior Livestock edging out Rafter H Bar for second place, 68 points to 66.5 points.

The rodeo, sponsored by both the DeSoto County Rodeo and Cattlemen's associations, drew working cowboys, not professionals; its purpose is to showcase Florida's ranching industry to state residents.

Paul Albritton, A Bar L's team captain, said team members were hard at work until 2 p.m. Friday, the day of competition. There was more work to do Saturday, at least until 4:30 p.m., when he came back to the arena to claim the team's prize money and championship belt buckles.

Second- and third-place winners both received prize money. The second-place team also earned saddle blankets and third place winners got breast collars for their horses.

The circuit victory was the first for A Bar L, according to Albritton, and earned them a place in the first cattlemen's circuit championship. He said that the team, having qualified, doesn't plan to enter any other circuit events.

"It went good," Albritton said of the rodeo. "We got the luck of the draw -- best cattle, best horses -- and we had a really good team."

Albritton singled out teammates Donnie Crawford and Myron Albritton for some praise in the steer roping and branding event.

"They done a really good job," he said, "because neither one does it every day."

He also credited his sponsor, Alton Langford, who spearheaded the creation of the team.

Pryor appeared cautiously optimistic about the first rodeo, saying she wouldn't know the final figures until sometime this week. She said her goal was to raise funds for the 4-H organization "so we can provide better opportunities for our youth in this county."

Cattlemen's Ranch Rodeo results

Team: 1, A Bar L Ranch, 81; Superior Livestock, 68; Raftor H Bar, 66.5; Bluehead Ranch, 57; Thomas Cattle, 55; Faithful W Ranch, 49.5; Flying B Ranch, 46; WFD Cattle, 42.5; Bronson Ranch, 42.5; Palmetto Pimps, 38.5; Arcadia Animal Hospital, 38; Babcock Ranch, 36; Flying L Ranch, 29.5.

Broncs: (tie) Jeremy Waters, Babcock Ranch and Michael Grimaldi, Rafter H Bar, 71 points.

Steer tying: Myron Albritton, Travis Person and Donnie Crawford, A Bar L, 51 seconds.

Wild cow milking: Myron Albritton, Travis Person and Josh Varnes, A Bar L, 11.79 seconds.

Barrel racing: Nicole Brown, Arcadia Animal Hospital, 17.467 seconds.

Relay race: Charles Roberts Stevens, Ira McClelland, Billy Adams and Joey Drake, Superior Livestock, 41.47 seconds.

Wild horse: A Bar L, 27.10 seconds.

Steer roping and branding: Myron Albritton, Donnie Crawford and Lynette Tindall, A Bar L, 28.97 seconds.

Bulls: No one completed 8-second requirement.

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