

The Team Roping Journal's
EXTRA

OCTOBER/2020

**The 2020
PRORODEO SEASON
Wrap-Up**



Issue presented by

COSEQUIN[®]
Joint Health Supplements

PRCA'S TOP 15 HEADERS AND HEELERS OF 2020

The top 15 headers and heelers have qualified for the 2020 Wrangler NFR. This time, contestants will be headed to the Lone Star State and compete in 10 rounds at the Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas, home to the Texas Rangers, where they will compete for a minimum payout of \$6 million. Here you will find who has qualified to compete from Dec. 3-12.



TOP 15 HEADERS

1) Luke Brown	\$89,664.97
2) Clay Smith	\$69,703.55
3) Cody Snow	\$69,228.06
4) Colby Lovell	\$65,508.64
5) Dustin Egusquiza	\$64,176.04
6) Andrew Ward	\$63,872.30
7) Clay Tryan	\$57,629.29
8) Charly Crawford	\$55,229.27
9) Chad Masters	\$52,682.49
10) Erich Rogers	\$52,541.57
11) Kolton Schmidt	\$51,021.85
12) Nelson Wyatt	\$50,691.54
13) Levi Simpson	\$50,397.65
14) Jeff Flenniken	\$49,391.34
15) Brenten Hall	\$47,144.92



TOP 15 HEELERS

1) Joseph Harrison	\$70,299.00
2) Jade Corkill	\$69,703.55
3) Buddy Hawkins II	\$63,872.30
4) Jake Long	\$63,227.15
5) Junior Nogueira	\$58,083.97
6) Travis Graves	\$56,514.01
7) Shay Carroll	\$56,267.31
8) Paul Eaves	\$56,159.04
9) Logan Medlin	\$54,620.84
10) Wesley Thorp	\$52,682.49
11) Paden Bray	\$52,541.57
12) Levi Lord	\$51,890.04
13) Tyler Worley	\$51,137.68
14) Hunter Koch	\$51,021.85
15) Chase Tryan	\$47,144.92

NEW **PELLETS** FOR EASY FEEDING!

When Performance Matters, Choose

COSEQUIN[®]

Joint Health Supplements



INTRODUCING COSEQUIN[®] **ASU** PELLETS



AVAILABLE
WITH
COLLECTIBLE
STORAGE
BUCKET

AT SELECT RETAILERS
FOR A LIMITED TIME!



DISCOVER COSEQUIN PELLETS AT COSEQUINEQUINE.COM/PELLETS

▼ Survey conducted among equine veterinarians who recommended oral joint health supplements.

Show Me the Money!

\$6 Million Minimum Payoff Guaranteed at 2020 NFR

We all now know that the 2020 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo will be held December 3-12 at Globe Life Field in Arlington, which is the state-of-the-art home to professional baseball's Texas Rangers. Since that announcement, the cowboy community buzz has naturally been about the bottom line. Who better to help us sift through rodeo's rumor mill and set the record straight on the payoff at NFR 2020 than Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association Chief Executive Officer George Taylor?

According to Taylor, the 2020 NFR will pay a minimum of \$6 million, with every effort being made to reach the recent-times standard of \$10 million between now and December. If it sticks, that's \$4 million less than it's been shelling out in Las Vegas the last few years. But it's a strong start next to what could have been no NFR at all in these trying COVID-19 times.

"Everything on the dollars will be reduced by about 40 percent," Taylor said. "And for the first time, dollars and points are disconnected. We wanted contestants to know that there are still 10 million points available at the NFR. So if you come in 15th you still have the same shot at a world championship as if it were paying \$10 million."

With so few of rodeo's richest regular-season rodeos contested in this year of coronavirus cancellations, Taylor's thought on this is that keeping money and points equal would too strongly favor the front-runners, some of whom had just one big win in the early going of 2020. With no Reno, Cheyenne, Salinas or Pendleton, to name just a few of the big rodeos we've all missed dearly this year, catching the early-season leaders has proven a tall task.

The few big rodeos we did have basically over-influenced the outcome of the regular season," Taylor said. "Wyatt



THE TOP 15 IN EACH EVENT WILL COMPETE IN THE GLOBE LIFE FIELD—HOME TO THE TEXAS RANGERS.

Casper said something along the lines of, 'If I win the world, I don't want to win it with an asterisk.' Here's a guy with a pretty good-sized lead (in the world standings), who still represents the cowboy spirit of wanting things to be fair."

To keep it super simple and prevent every person reading this from having to do the math, Casper actually won \$600,000 in March for winning the saddle bronc riding at The American at AT&T Stadium in Arlington, including his half of the \$1 million side pot for qualifiers who weren't seeded into the rodeo based on their 2019 finish. Casper split the million with tie-down roper Shad Mayfield. In Casper's case, the \$50,000 of his American earnings that counted toward the world standings has him on top by \$35,507 more than next-in-line Ryder Wright.

Not all leads have proven insurmountable. Luke Brown and Joseph Harrison won \$100,000 a man at The American, with \$50,000 of that

counting toward the world standings. As of today, defending World Champion Header Clay Smith has pulled within right at \$20,000 of Luke's lead. But Smith's 2020 heeler, Jade Corkill, has managed to pass Harrison by a little over \$2,000 on the heeling side.

As for actual dollars and cents, rounds at the 2019 NFR in Vegas paid \$26,230.77, and first in the average paid \$67,269.23. Every NFR qualifier received a \$10,000 bonus check when he picked up his (or her) back number before it started. This year's go-round points will be 26,231, and the average will be worth 67,269 points, based on last year's payoff. As for the paychecks if the payoff stays at \$6 million and there is indeed a 40-percent reduction from last year, winning a round at the 2020 NFR will pay \$15,738.46, and the average will be worth \$40,361.54.

Remember, this is all still a work in progress and none of these numbers are yet set in stone. ■

NEW PELLETS FOR EASY FEEDING!

When Performance Matters, Choose

COSEQUIN[®]

Joint Health Supplements



INTRODUCING COSEQUIN[®] ASU PELLETS



AVAILABLE
WITH
COLLECTIBLE
STORAGE
BUCKET

AT SELECT RETAILERS
FOR A LIMITED TIME!



DISCOVER COSEQUIN PELLETS AT [COSEQUINEQUINE.COM/PELLETS](https://cosequinequine.com/pellets)

▼ Survey conducted among equine veterinarians who recommended oral joint health supplements.

The Class of 2020 NFR Rookies

In the 2020 PRCA world standings line up you will come across six names that are unfamiliar to the jumbotrons at the Wrangler NFR. Three headers and three heelers are preparing for their first-ever NFR—this time in Texas.

HEADERS:



ANDREW WARD,
heading for Buddy Hawkins II

• **The Feeling:** I feel honored to be able to go and rope at Arlington (Texas). I'm tickled that they could get it in somewhere. I feel super blessed to be going. I've always dreamed of roping in Vegas when I was a kid, but now it's more that I'm excited for the opportunity to go 10 nights for \$15,000. It doesn't matter where they have it. I'll go and I appreciate it.

• **The Preparation:** There are so many ropings that are going on right now, so we're going to try to get through them. As soon as we hear the dimensions then we'll probably try to make a lot of runs. I have a lot of head horses. We'll set it up similar to what it would be like in Arlington, maybe put up a rope barrier and see what horse I want to ride.

• **NFR Horsepower:** I rode Biscuit (10) at every official rodeo but one. I traded for a gray named Snow Man. I'll probably ride one of them.



NELSON WYATT,
heading for Levi Lord

• **The Feeling:** I'm pretty excited about it. I'm looking forward to it and getting to be out there and competing. Everyone asks me since it is my first time if I'm bummed since it's not in Vegas but, I think it's cool if it never moves again we will be one of the few people that got to say they roped at the Finals in Arlington.

• **The Preparation:** I feel like it will probably be a short barrier. We'll try to make aggressive, fast runs, but controlled at the same time. I feel like our team is pretty aggressive natured, so we'll probably just be aggressive there and not change a whole lot.

• **NFR Horsepower:** It will either be between my grey, (Teddy Bear, 11) or I have a sorrel (Short Go, 16) that I got from Jake Cooper. I'll ride which ever one will feel the best at the time. I'll have both of them there, but I don't know which one I'll be on until that time gets here.



JEFF FLENNIKEN,
heading for Tyler Worley

• **The Feeling:** I feel pretty good about it. I'm excited to get down there and practice more with TylerWorley. The whole deal is exciting and a blessing. I'll be nervous, but I'm just excited to be there. I feel like it's what I've worked for and I feel like I'm ready for it.

• **The Preparation:** I've been practicing at about two-under start at home and just going at them.

• **NFR Horsepower:** It's either between Tyler Wade's bay horse or Jason Stewart's horse. I feel like the steers are going to be a little bit bigger and stronger. My horse is kind of small and I just need something that will get a hold of the steers a little bit more. I've been riding Jason's horse. I have him with me. I was going to try Tyler's when I got down to Texas.

HEELERS:



LOGAN MEDLIN,
heeling for Charly Crawford

• **The Feeling:** It's exciting to have met this goal, but at the same time I know that I have to keep my head down and keep working at it because there are still other goals that I haven't met yet. I know that a guy has to be willing to work at it every day because if not, someone else is. I'm relieved to have met this goal, but there's more goals left to meet in my career and it's not going to be easy, but we are going to keep grinding. I don't feel like anyone can say this year was easy. We traveled more miles for less money than we usually do.

• **The Preparation:** I told Charly (Crawford) that this is his 10th time and it's my first, so whatever he thought we needed to do to get ready then I was in. I'm not one to question. We have some steers set aside that we're going to practice on, but whenever it gets set in stone with the dimensions, we'll practice that at some point.

• **NFR Horsepower:** I feel like Drago will fit that setup good. He gets down the arena good, but he's also forgiving. I know he's probably not going to take my throw away from me and that's worth a lot for me to know that if I need another step out of him, he'll give it to me. He's the best one that I've got so I'm going to roll the dice with him. I'm going to have another horse that I bought at the beginning of this year. His name is Lynx.



PADEN BRAY,
heeling for Erich Rogers

• **The Feeling:** It was such a reliever to make it this year. I didn't make it last year and this year isn't just a breath of fresh air, but it was good to get that goal accomplished. I'm looking forward to Arlington. I wouldn't say that I belong there, but it's where I want to be. I look at it as if I'll have two NFR rookie years.

• **The Preparation:** I'll probably try to get 40 or 50 head of steers put together. Since the arena is going to be bigger I bet we don't change up really on how we practice. I'll be riding probably six head a day. I don't want to change what I'm doing. I feel like my run is good enough. We'll probably keep our horses sharp and keep ourselves sharp.

• **NFR Horsepower:** I'll probably ride Slider. I'll bring Hugh Hefner, too. They're who I had all year, but since that arena is a little bigger I'll probably ride slider I'd imagine. He's been feeling outstanding. I was 3.8 on him at Waco, Texas, and he's feeling phenomenal. I've rode him for nine years, so he's kind of like my pacifier. I'm pretty comfortable on him.



Levi Lord,
heeling for Nelson Wyatt

• **The Feeling:** I feel good about it. This is Nelson and my second year roping together. We're pretty patterned roping together. I'd say this is about the toughest year to make it. We went further miles for less money and everybody was at every rodeo. Every time you showed up in July and August there was 100 teams and it was tough as could be. If you won money this year then you definitely earned it. I looked forward to Vegas, obviously, think we're more thankful that they're having it somewhere and it sounds like its going to be really good in Arlington. I look forward to qualifying for Vegas, but for this year we're just thankful they're giving us somewhere to go.

• **The Preparation:** We're going to practice pretty hard in November. Nelson went home to Alabama for a couple weeks. We're just going to practice how we usually do. We'll rope some on our good horses and then we have some practice horses. I think our plan is to stay more on the aggressive side. The rounds pay so much so we're going to try and stick to our run.

• **NFR Horsepower:** I'm going to ride Little Bay (23). I don't really have much of a backup plan. I've roped so many on him and feel comfortable on him. I don't see why I would want to do anything different. I have a couple other horses that I'll probably ride if I have to, but he's definitely the one I'm planning on riding him. ■

HORSES OF THE YEAR by Chelsea Shaffer



KURT STEINKE PHOTO

Bob Strikes Again: Minor's RK Tuff Trinket Wins Second Head Horse of the Year Honors in 2020

Riley Minor's RK Tuff Trinket—better known as Bob—is once again the PRCA's Purina Head Horse of the Year.

Bob won the award back in 2018, and he also won the Head Horse of the BFI title in 2016 and 2019. He's perhaps one of the defining head horses of this generation, even in the twilight of his career at 19.

"I think I'm going to throw his papers away because I don't want him getting any older," Riley laughed. "I was really hoping he wasn't 19. He's got a little arthritis somewhere, but he's tough. I give him Previcox in the summer, and Adequan when I think about it. He just gets Renew Gold and a little Formula 1 Noni, and he's really low maintenance."

While Minor finished the year 23rd in the PRCA's world standings, he and brother Brady finished the season with a win at the Gold Buckle Beer Tour Finale in Rapid City, South Dakota, and they kicked off 2021's rodeo year with a win at their Columbia River Circuit Finals. Riley rode Bob at all 40 rodeos he went to this season—a departure from a normal year when Bob would split time with Riley's backup horse.

"The only hole in Bob is that he doesn't

score perfect," Riley said. "He's amped up in the box, and you have to know how to ride him as far as scoring him. Guys have gotten on him and broke the barrier. When you let go, he's going fast. I think he just wants to get to the steer so bad he just won't sit there REALLY quiet. That horse has a mind of his own."

Perhaps that's all thanks to the horse's background. Riley always knew the horse was good when friend and fellow Washington roper Bob Moriarty was heading and heeling on him at amateur rodeos around the state. So one day back in 2014, Riley stopped Moriarty to ask if he'd sell him.

"He said, 'Well they have to haze on him in the perf here.' They were hazing bull doggin steers on him," Riley said. "I stuck around there and it turned out to be a life-changing deal for me."

Now just months shy of the two-decade mark, Bob isn't losing a step. But that doesn't mean Riley isn't trying to figure out what life-after-Bob might look like.

"It's hard when you're riding the best horse you'll ever get to ride. I wouldn't say he's Walt or Scooter because they were unbelievable for so many years.

But money can't go buy another Bob. I was lucky that I got him, and our styles fit each other. He might not be a great horse for a guy who reaches a lot because he's running hard. He's better for me or Charles Pogue or Turtle Powell. Every good header is looking for horses at all times. My backup is still Tupac, who came from Dustin Bird. I ride him at some ropings and win on him. Compared to Bob you won't just love anything else you get on. I haven't been in a panic because I still have a good backup horse. But it's not like a Ford pickup that you can go down to the lot and tell them you want the King Ranch edition. You can't do that in the horse game."



JAMIE ARVISO PHOTO

Drago, Carrying Medlin to First NFR, Splits 2020 Heel Horse of the Year Title with Minor's Sug

Logan Medlin and Brady Minor are in two very different spots in 2020.

Medlin, of Tatum, New Mexico, is qualifying for his first Wrangler National Finals Rodeo ninth in the world, with \$54,620.84 in season earnings. Minor, of Ellensburg, will miss his first NFR in eight years, finishing 23rd with \$36,096.58. But they've certainly got one thing in common: the best 25 heelers in the world believe they both ride the best horses in the business.

Nita Win Playboy, Ridden and Owned by Logan Medlin

Medlin's Nita Win Playboy (who he calls Drago) is an 11-year-old ex-ranch horse who Medlin rode the bulk of the regular season, raised in Hereford, Texas, by Ronnie Mahaley and sold as a yearling through the Clovis Horse Sale to Rusty Henard, a rancher neighbor of the Medlin family.

"I had a stud horse that came from the same guy that I'd had for several years," Henard explained. "I had heard he had to take a bunch of horses to the sale, so I went up there just to look. I had no intention of buying that horse. But my dad and I went back there and looked, and I said I better buy him. But he was at the very end of the sale, and I knew we'd have to stay way up into the night. I thought he might be pretty cheap, but he was a good-enough looking colt that there were a lot of people waiting and I didn't get him bought as cheap as I'd have liked."

When it came time to start Drago, he was broncy and even pitched Henard at a branding in Colorado.

"For a long time when I broke him and rode him he'd travel with his ears pinned flat back," Henard said. "He just traveled like that. It took forever to trot through the pasture with his ears forward. He was half mad you were riding him."

Henard started taking the horse to a few team roping jackpots and really got the feeling he'd make a big-time heel horse. And the watchy streak the colt had was a good-enough reason to sell him, Henard thought, as he didn't think he'd make a junior rodeo horse for his two daughters, Avery, now 13, and Kolbi, now 10.

"The Henards help us brand, and I always thought that horse looked cool and I liked the way he moved," Medlin said. "He's not just 100% bomb-proof, and he's a little bit quirky. I'd just sold my horse I won the College Finals on, and in the same trip, I went and picked up Drago."

Medlin threw Drago to the fire right from the start. That was August 2015, and Medlin was afoot and set to heel for NFR header Brady Tryan in the North-

west—a big break for a kid who hadn't ever been to the last stretch of rodeos that included Ellensburg and Pendleton.

"He was greener than green, and so was I, and he was all I had," Medlin said. "I'd never been to Pendleton, and I just threw him in. I didn't even have another horse with me."

This year, behind 10-time NFR header Charly Crawford, Medlin won the Wild-fire Open to the World and the Oakley Independence Day Rodeo en route to his best regular season yet. And along the way, he turned the heads of the rest of the best heelers in the world.

"I had people text me congratulations and I didn't know what they were talking about," Medlin said. "Jake Cooper sent me a screenshot of the Horse of the Year results. I wasn't expecting it by no means. I was surprised."



Leos Highbrow, Ridden and Owned by Brady Minor

Brady Minor's Sug is the third horse Minor has owned to win the Heel Horse of the Year title, joining Dugout in 2011 and Rey in 2014 and 2015. Minor's ridden Sug since winning RFD-TV's The American on him in 2017, and he's been on the short list for the title ever since.

"Not making the NFR this year, we had a real bad year and I haven't won any major rodeos or jackpots," Minor said. "I didn't expect him to be that high. I felt like he was a top five horse no matter what so I nominated him. It just so happened that three or four guys rode him at the end of the year at three or four rodeos. Clay Futrell won Redmond on him, and he won second at Salt Lake the same week and Levi Lord jumped on him and I think those guys gave him a vote and I was able to give him a vote, too. I didn't

know what to expect."

Minor's brother, Riley, and his horse Bob, also won the Horse of the Year title, making them the first pair of brothers to win the Horse of the Year titles in the same year.

"They're both good horses and we didn't ride anything else," Minor said. "It's unfortunate we didn't win more. It's a good little ending. Both are getting old so hopefully they have another year or two in them. They worked pretty good the last couple weeks."

Notably, World Champion Tie-Down Roper Shane Hanchey even jump rode Sug in 2020, filling in for Joseph Harrison behind Wyatt Imus in Afton, Wyoming, heeling a steer in 5.4 seconds.

This magazine has covered Sug's story extensively over the years, but in case you missed it: Sug came to the Minor rig through Travis Woodard, who bought the horse from Kyle Crick.

"I thought he was a good colt and I bought him," Woodard said. "He was gentle and he was smart. I rode him for a couple years, and they used to have those college rodeos at the Lone Star in Stephenville, and you could go twice at this little Open rodeo. I didn't like my good horse at the time, and I was really really liking that colt. He wasn't scared of the banner or the announcer or the music. I don't think everybody else realized he was great until a couple years later, but when I started taking him there is when I realized he was going to be great."

Woodard made the National Finals Rodeo on Sug in 2016, and with that goal accomplished, Woodard planned to slow down his rodeo schedule and spend more time with his family.

"I had another horse I really liked at the time," Woodard explained. "So I decided I could sell him. I'd let Brady ride him at The American, and they ended up winning it."

That was 2017—the year the Minors won \$100,000 at The American.

"I was going to have to pay \$25,000 mount money," Brady said. "So I would have had to pay that if I didn't buy him one way or another. It's a good thing I did win that rodeo and was able to buy him, because I'd be regretting it now if I didn't own him." ■