



TOWN OF ESTES PARK

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ROOFTOP RODEO www.RooftopRodeo.com

When: 7 p.m.
July 5-10, 2024

Where: Granny May Arena
Estes Park, Colorado

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RELEASE DATE: July 8, 2024



Eller hits his stride at Rooftop

ESTES PARK, Colo. – Austin Eller knew he needed to be fast.

He struggled a couple days ago in the opening round of steer wrestling at the Rooftop Rodeo, so his only chance at making money in Estes Park was to be speedy during Monday's fourth performance. Riding Dallas, a 16-year-old sorrel gelding he owns, Eller grappled his steer to the ground in 3.7 seconds to take the second-round lead after making the fastest run of the rodeo.

"I had to be fast, and I had the steer to do it on," said Eller, 30 of Glendo, Wyoming. "He was a bit slower, so I just tried to take advantage of the situation."

Meanwhile, he was also supporting his traveling partner, Australian Kodie Jang, who finished third in the opening round, sits right behind Eller in the second round and leads the two-run aggregate with a cumulative time of 8.5 seconds.

They're taking advantage of Dallas, a red racer with the right mindset to do things right when it comes to help cowboys wrestle steers.

"I trained him, and Nick Guy rode him at the (National Finals Rodeo) last year," Eller said. "He's been a blessing.

"I got him when he was 4, so I've had him for a while. I bought him and ranched on him for a couple of years. He was just a blowed-up team roping horse, so I ranched on him for a long time to get him to where I had more control of him. Now, he's just dog-gentle. My kids ride around on him; he's just a big pet."

A good horse helps cowboys go a long way. For their owners, there are many advantages. In addition to the potential of winning a big second-round payday at Rooftop Rodeo, Eller lets other bulldoggers ride Dallas and earns a percentage of their winnings. The better the horse, the more cowboys want the ride.

In Guy's case, the Wisconsin steer wrestler earned about \$72,000 at the 2023 NFR, Eller took a nice piece of that pie by the time ProRodeo's championship came to a close. Making the NFR is every

cowboy's dream, but they have to have a successful campaign to make it happen. Only the top 15 on the money list in each event at the conclusion of the regular season advance to Las Vegas in December.

"I'm going pretty hard this year," Eller said. "I want to make sure right now that I make the (Mountain States) Circuit Finals and just keep trying to get into everything where I can get qualified for all the winter rodeos so I can go harder next year.

"I've stayed hooked, but I haven't had near the success I wanted to out here."

The Mountain States Circuit is made up primarily of rodeos and contestants in Wyoming and Colorado, so doing well in Estes Park can go a long way to bolstering one of Eller's goals. Known for being a big man's rodeo event – Guy is 6-foot-3, 235 pounds – Eller is a bit more diminutive, but he doesn't let that slow him down. Why does he do an event that is defined by brawn?

"I started bulldogging when I was 16 years old on a dare," he said. "Somebody told me I wasn't tough enough, and I just started by proving them wrong and just fell in love with it.

"Sometimes you might just get packed off, but on the good ones, if you do it right, it's going to work, and it looks good, too."

Rooftop Rodeo

July 5-10

Bareback riding leaders: 1. Clay Jorgenson, 83.5 points on The Cervi Brothers' Easy Does It; 2. Donny Proffit, 81; 3. (tie) Caleb Bennett, Wyatt Denny and Bodee Lammers, 79.5 each; 6. Keenan Hayes, 79.

Steer wrestling: First round: 1. Wyatt Johnson, 3.9 seconds, \$1,215; 2. Cole Trainor, 4.2, \$1,006; 3. Kodie Jang, 4.3, \$796; 4. Hadley Jackson, 4.6, \$587; 5. Jacob Sterkel, 5.4, \$377; 6. (tie) Kalane Anders and Gage Hesse, 5.6, \$105 each. **Second round leaders:** 1. Austin Eller, 3.7 seconds; 2. Kodie Jang, 4.2; 3. Zach Hamar, 5.0; 4. Wyatt Johnson, 5.3; 5. Kalane Anders, 5.8; 6. (tie) Avery Jamerman, Cody Pratt and Brian Snell, 6.2 each. **Average leaders:** 1. Kodie Jang, 8.5 seconds on two head; 2. Wyatt Johnson, 9.2; 3. Kalane Anders, 11.4; 4. Gage Hesse, 14.7; 5. Hadley Jackson, 17.8; 6. Austin Eller, 19.0; no other qualified runs.

Team roping: First round: 1. Coy Brittain/Michael Fortenberry, 5.1 seconds, \$1,702 each; 2. Tanner Pallesen/Jade Espenscheid, 5.2, \$1,408; 3. Teagan Bentley/Matt Schieck, 5.4, \$1,115; 4. (tie) Devon McDaniel/Walt Woodard and Wyatt Murray/Rhett Nebeker, 5.6, \$675 each; 6. Brayden Fillmore/Josh Fillmore, 6.0, \$293. **Second round leaders:** 1. Brayden Fillmore/Josh Fillmore, 5.1 seconds; 2. Chris Francis/Cade Passig, 5.5; 3. Rio Nutter/Coy Johnson, 5.6; 4. Jase Staudt/Jayden Johnson, 6.3; 5. Todd Drommond/Levi Walter, 6.6; 6. Jr. Dees/JC Flake, 9.2. **Average leaders:** 1. Brayden Fillmore/Josh Fillmore, 11.1 seconds on two head; 2. Jase Staudt/Jayden Johnson, 12.7; 3. Teagan Bentley/Matt Schieck, 15.5; 4. Coy Brittain/Michael Fortenberry, 16.0; 5. Austin Barstow/Zach Varian, 21.8; 6. Tanner Pallesen/Jade Espenscheid, 5.2 on one head; no other qualified runs.

Saddle bronc riding leaders: 1. Carson Bingham, 80.5 points on The Cervi Brothers' Kiss My Ace; 2. (tie) Shorty Garrett and Q McWhorter, 79.5 each; 4. Statler Wright, 79; 5. Bailey Small, 78; 6. Ira Dickinson, 77.

Tie-down roping: First round: 1. Hayden Ford, 8.4 seconds, \$1,675; 2. Trevor Thiel, 8.6, \$1,386; 3. (tie) Cash Fuesz and Cole Walker, 8.8, \$953 each; 5. Sterling Smith, 9.0, \$520; 6. Ace Slone, 9.1, \$289. **Second round leaders:** 1. Chance Wall, 8.2 seconds; 2. Cash Fretwell, 8.4; 3. (tie) Rodney Jackson and Zack Kirkpatrick, 8.5 each; 5. Hayden Ford, 8.9; 6. Jeremiah Peek, 9.0. **Average leaders:** 1. Hayden Ford, 17.3 seconds on two head; 2. Cash Fretwell, 17.7; 3. Austin Lawrence, 18.4; 4. Cash Fuesz, 18.6; 5. Jeremiah Peek, 18.9; 6. Colby Anders, 19.2; no other qualified runs.

Barrel racing leaders: 1. Sharin Hall, 16.33 seconds; 2. Madison McCaffity, 16.52; 3. Sage Kohr, 16.60; 4. Tillar King, 16.61; 5. Jentry Vandenberg, 16.62; 6. Sami Buum, 16.63.

Bull riding leaders: No qualified rides.