



NATIONAL FINALS RODEO



JOSH HOLMBERG/LAS VEGAS REVIEW JOURNAL

Cody Ohl of Hico, Texas, caught this calf with a sixth-place time of 8.80 seconds during the tie-down roping competition in the fourth round of the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo at the Thomas & Mack Center last year. Although most rodeo cowboys compete in about 75 rodeos, Ohl appeared in just more than 40 so he could spend more time with his children.

Staying home works for Ohl

Tie-down roper cuts schedule, not winnings, to spend time with kids

By PATRICK EVERSON
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

If Cody Ohl's 2013 season were one of those clever AT&T commercials, the script might go something like this:

Moderator: "So what's better, more rodeos or less rodeos?"

Cute 5-year-old kids, screaming: "More rodeos!!"

Except the kids would be wrong. At least in Ohl's case. Because what's really better is making a lot of money at fewer rodeos.

National Finals Rodeo contestants can count up to 75 rodeos toward their season earnings each year, and most riders and ropers have to get somewhere in that neighborhood to be assured of qualifying for the season-ending event.

But Ohl, as has been his wont the past few years, hit just 41 rodeos, although you'd never know it by his winnings in tie-down roping. He made \$94,943, good for third in the world standings. Entering the NFR, which began Thursday at the Thomas & Mack Center, he trailed leader and two-time defending world champion Tuf Cooper

by about \$40,000.

But if Ohl keeps up with his average rate of return, that ground absolutely can be made up over the course of 10 days at the world's richest rodeo.

"It's worked well," said Ohl, a five-time world champion from Hico, Texas. "I've gotten to stay home quite a bit and still compete in enough rodeos to make the Finals."

And he finished strong, winning the last two rodeos of the regular season, at Omaha and at Stephenville, Texas.

The schedule has allowed him to spend more time with his kids, who are getting more involved in sports,

particularly baseball for sons Hunter, 13, and Blake, 11, while his 7-year-old daughter, Saylor, plays softball.

"It's a blessing," said Ohl, who has also helped coach some youth football. "My dad was always there and worked on a normal job. I knew what it meant to have him around, and that's what I've tried to do with my kids. That I can still qualify for the Finals while doing pretty much half of what everyone else is doing, and still have a shot at the world championship, is great.

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Tie-down roper knows he's ready physically

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