



Who To Watch At The 2015 Wrangler National Finals Rodeo

We've got our eyes on 10 rodeo cowboys and cowgirls with a chance at the big prize.

By Lindsay Whelchel

Zeke Thurston



Sarah Rose McDonald



Rusty Wright



The Wrangler National Finals Rodeo, coming up in Las Vegas December 3–12, 2015, is the culmination of a yearlong struggle on the wide-open rodeo road. Professional cowboys and cowgirls have vied for a coveted spot in the top 15 of their respective events so they can take their place in the Thomas & Mack Center arena for 10 nights of rodeo action, battling on dirt for a chunk of an unprecedented \$10 million in prize money and a chance to be crowned world champion.

Jade Corkill and Clay Tryan



Evan Jayne



Callie duPerier



Brennon Eldred



HERE ARE A FEW YOU'LL WANT TO WATCH:

The reigning world champion bull rider, Sage Kimzey, shattered records last year as only the second rookie bull rider in the history of rodeo to win a world title. This year, his dominance at the top of the standings has continued, and he's well-positioned to be a repeat champion. Kimzey is no rookie anymore.

It's only fitting that Kimzey's travel partner and fellow Oklahoman, bull rider Brennon Eldred, would pace him in season earnings. They call themselves the #580 crew for their area code, and with Eldred, Oklahoma stands a good chance of having another world champion bull rider, even if it's not Kimzey.

With a father and three uncles breaking a record for the number of brothers to qualify for the same NFR, Rusty Wright knows that world titles in saddle bronc riding are plentiful on his family tree. This year, he'll qualify for his first trip to the Thomas & Mack Center and might just take home a title of his own.

Looking to defend their 2014 world championship will be team roping powerhouses Clay Tryan and Jade Corkill. Perhaps they know best that you can't do it alone when it comes to hitting the rodeo jackpot in Vegas.

You couldn't miss 2014 Barrel Racing World Champion Fallon Taylor if you tried. The always-colorful cowgirl will no doubt be lighting up the arena with personality and perseverance in her quest for back-to-back championships.

But Taylor will not be without competition in the form of two NFR first-timers, Sarah Rose McDonald and Callie duPerier. These girls have held strong in the standings this year and likely won't let unfamiliarity daunt them in the finals.

Rodeo success is a passport to Vegas for Canadian saddle bronc rider Zeke Thurston and French bareback rider Evan Jayne, both making their first trips to the NFR in 2015. Jayne keeps his fans updated in both French and English via social media, so how do you say *world champion* in French?

Fallon Taylor





THERE'S PLENTY YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS BEYOND THE ARENA TOO:

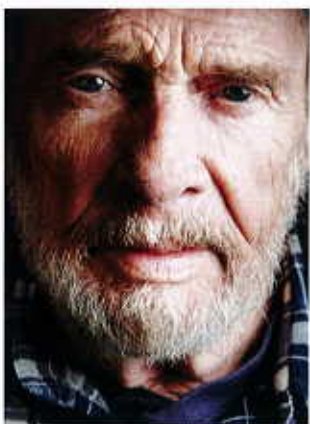
If champions are crowned inside the arena, they and thousands of other rodeo fans are outfitted, entertained, and even married outside of it.

This year Cowboy Christmas, the shopping and event extravaganza surrounding NFR, will be bigger than ever—so big, in fact, that it's moving from the North Halls to the South Halls of the Las Vegas Convention Center for more room. From the latest in Western fashion, jewelry, and lifestyle trends to skilled artisans showcasing their wares, the shopping is second to none. You'll find *Cowboys & Indians* at Booth 1431.

Things are going to get a lot wilder in the convention center with the expansion of the **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Hunter & Outdoor Christmas Expo**, extended this year to last all 10 days of the trade show in conjunction with Cowboy Christmas. Plus, the interactive elements of Cowboy Christmas will be back with the Wrangler Rodeo Arena, where miniature rough stock competitions will be in full swing along with showcases in horsemanship and roping. Rodeo Live presented by RodeoHouston brings a little Hollywood to the desert with shows like Flint Rasmussen's *Outside the Barrel* and Alexis Bloomer *Live* as well as programming from RFD-TV's live studio broadcasts.

And what's Vegas without a wedding? Head to the **Get Hitched Wedding Chapel** presented by B&W Trailer Hitches where you can literally marry the cowboy of your dreams, and then run off to the **Coors Rodeo Saloon** to grab a bite to eat and relive the glory from the previous night's rodeo. If you'd rather watch somebody else wear the dress, check out the **Miss Rodeo America Pageant** held at the MGM Grand Hotel & Casino from November 29 to December 6.

Once the curtains close on the nightly performances at the Thomas & Mack Center, make sure and see the champions crowned in person at the **Go-Round Buckle Presentations** at South Point Hotel Casino & Spa. **Rodeo Vegas** at The Mirage Hotel & Casino is the official NFR after-party of the PRCA. The MGM Grand's **Gold Buckle Zone** will host free concerts by the likes of Scotty McCreery, Blackberry Smoke, Craig Wayne Boyd, and other musical acts. Tanya Tucker, Trace Adkins, and Merle Haggard are a few of the big-name acts performing at the Golden Nugget Las Vegas during the NFR. Reba and Brooks & Dunn have an eight-night stand at Caesars Palace, and Gary Leffew's **Legendary Buck'N Ball**, Charlie Daniels Band, and the **National Finals Tonight Show** at The Orleans Hotel and Casino aren't to be missed either.



NFR EVENTS

The rodeo doesn't stop at the gates of the Thomas & Mack Center. There is plenty more to do and see on and off the Las Vegas Strip, including these highlights.

Bob Tallman Wrangler NFR Charity Bowling Tournament

December 5, Gold Coast Hotel & Casino
www.lasvegas.speedwaycharities.org

Wrangler NFR Pink Night Party

December 7, Westgate Las Vegas
www.westgateresorts.com

Spurs & Spikes Golf Tournament

December 11, Badlands Golf Club
www.prorodeohalloffame.com

For a full list of Wrangler NFR events, please visit
www.NFRexperience.com.

To keep up-to-date on all Wrangler NFR happenings, visit www.NFRexperience.com.